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★

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MOMENTS WITH MAGNUS

★

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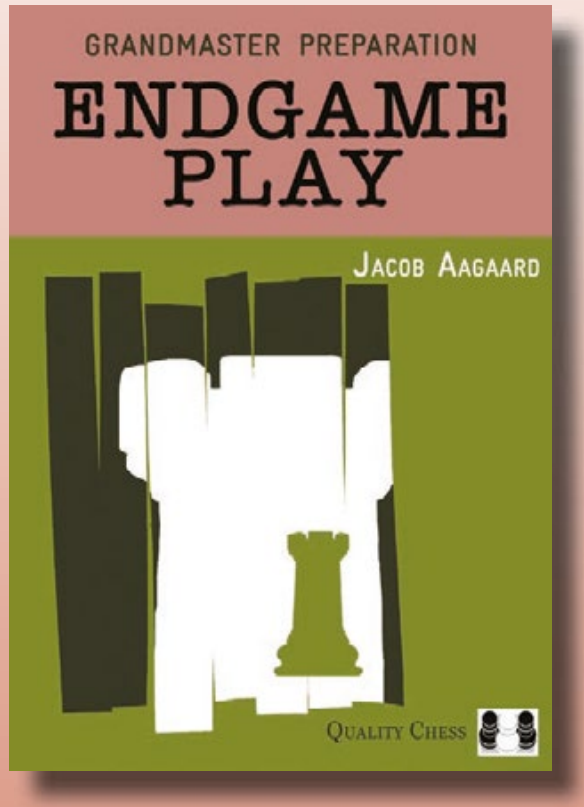

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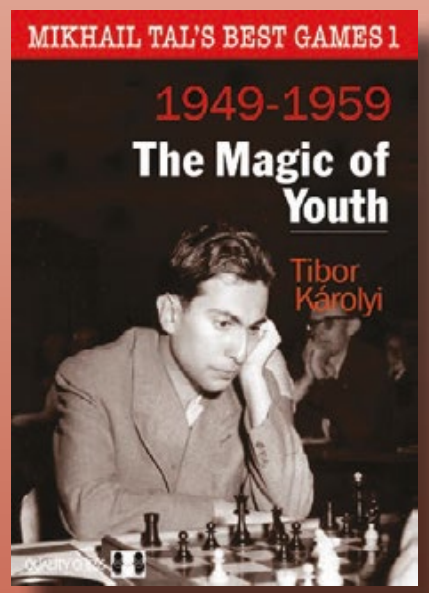

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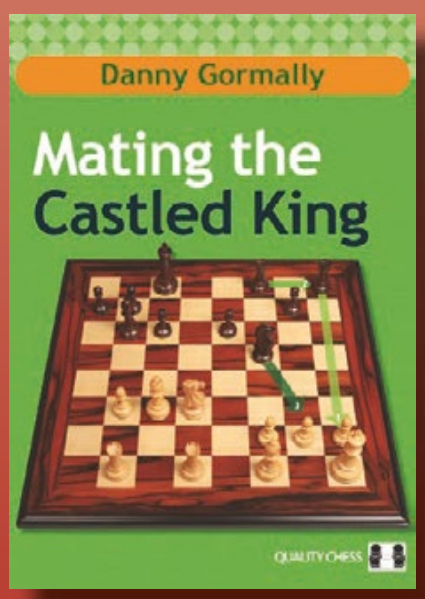

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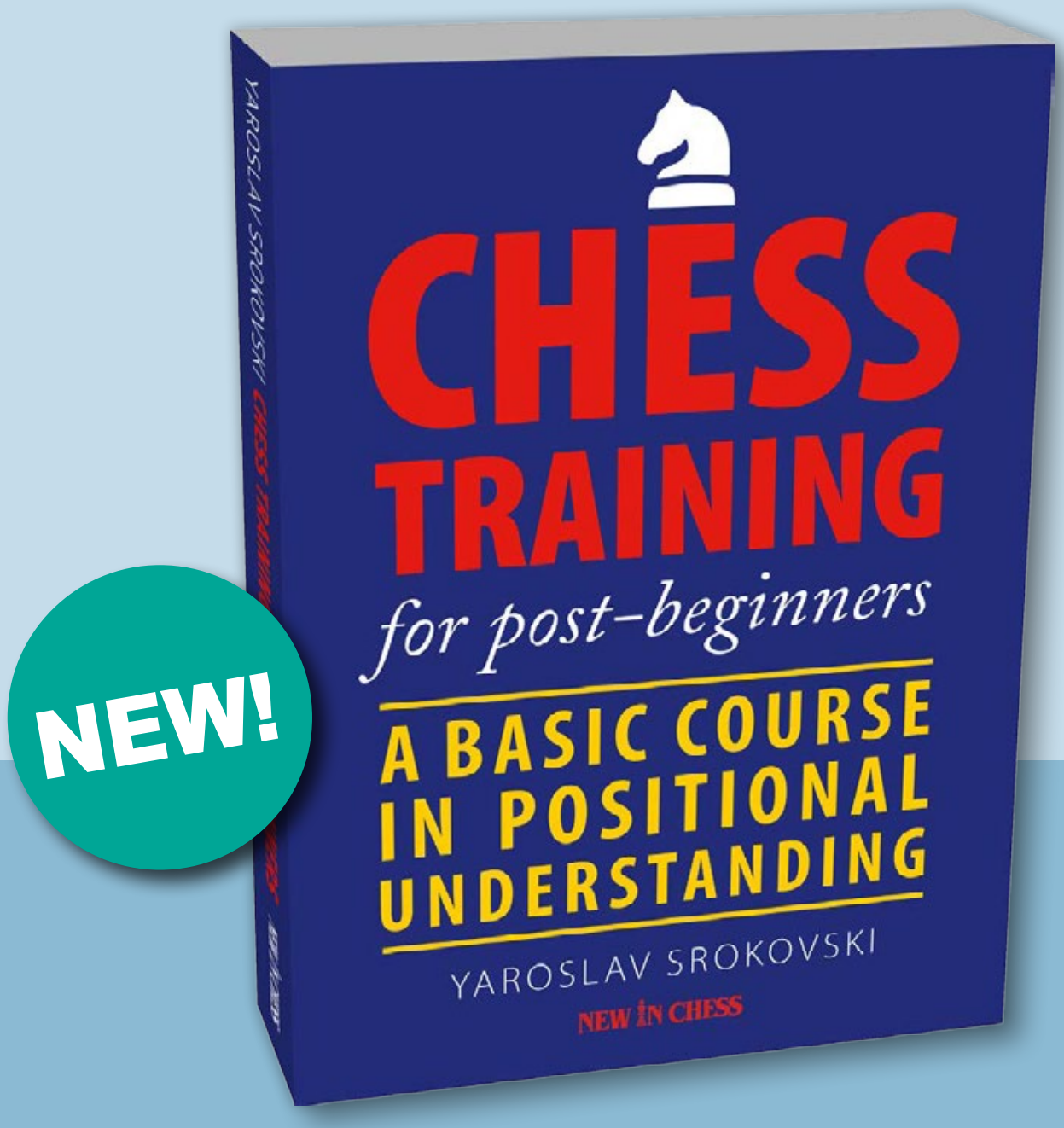

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PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
Odd Inge Aas, Vladimir Barsky, Kirill Merkuriev, Leon Muijs

COVER
Vishy Anand: Kirill Merkuriev

‘These post-result explanations are like people explaining the previous day’s stock market. It’s very nice, but it doesn’t really tell you much.’ – *Vishy Anand*

ODD INGE AAS

Meanwhile, back in Norway…

This time it's not the Ballroom of a five-star hotel in Chennai, but a modest room on the second floor of a wooden 19th-century house in Oslo. There is no glass wall separating him from the audience and there are no signs asking for silence. Sounds from the birthday party on the first floor are audible and a handful of spectators are standing around his board. While eight Candidates are deciding in Siberia who will challenge him in November, World Champion Magnus Carlsen plays a game for his old club Stavanger SK. If they win the match against Nordstrand, they will be promoted from the Norwegian First League to the *Eliteserien*, the Premier League. Carlsen defeats Bulgarian GM Vladimir Georgiev, who only found out who he was going to face hours before the start, and Stavanger SK wins the match 3½-2½. It was an impulsive decision taken a couple of days before the match. 'I was a bit surprised myself. The opportunity arose to play a grandmaster and to help my club a bit.' Or was he just itching to play while he was following the Candidates'?

Magnus Carlsen - Vladimir Georgiev
Oslo 2014
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 7.d3 ♗c5 8.c3 0-0 9.a4 d5 10.axb5 axb5 11.♖xa8 ♗xa8 12.exd5 ♘xd5 13.♖e1 b4 14.♕c2 f6 15.♘bd2 ♔h8 16.♘e4 ♗e7 17.h3 ♘a5 18.♗a2 b3 19.♗xb3 ♘xb3 20.♕xb3 ♘b6 21.d4 f5 22.♘c5 e4 23.♘e5 ♗d5 24.♕d1 ♗d6 25.♗f4 ♘c4 26.b4 g5 27.♗h2 f4 28.♘xc4 ♗xc5 29.♘d2 ♗d6 30.♘xe4 ♕e7 31.♘xd6 ♕xd6 32.♖e5 h6 33.h4! gxh4 34.♕h5 c6 35.f3 ♕f6 36.b5 ♖a8 37.♖e8+ ♖xe8 38.♕xe8+ ♔h7 39.♕d7+ ♔h8 40.b6 1-0

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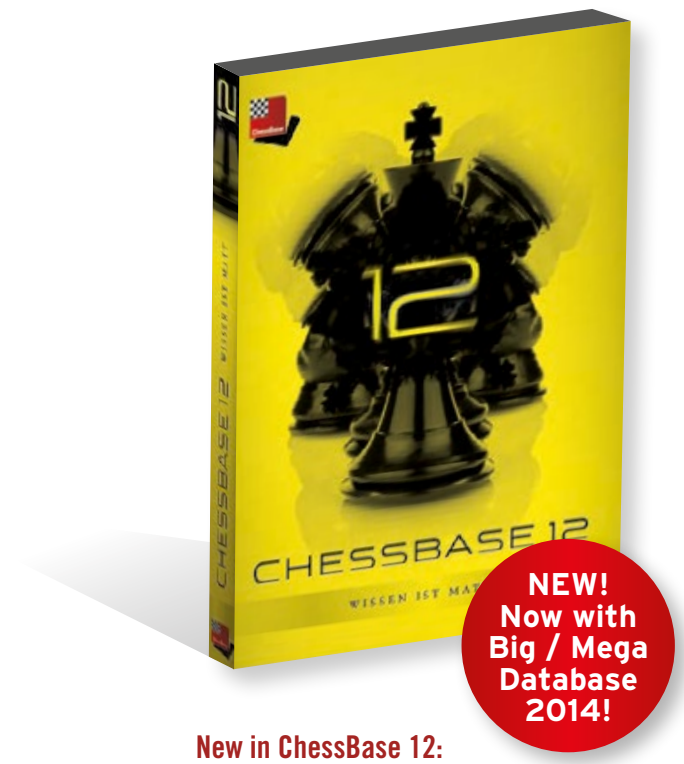

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Nigel Short and the ECF

In New In Chess 2014/2 Nigel Short chose to take a sideswipe at the 'thoroughly uninspiring' Roger Edwards, Andrew Paulson's predecessor as President of the English Chess Federation. Of course Roger's term in office was not only an oasis of tranquillity compared to his successor's, it also compared very favourably to that of his predecessor, CJ de Mooi.

De Mooi left the federation in chaos after his conduct at the 2011 British championships: he engaged in unwarranted media attacks on long-serving ECF officials and distributed large sums of money without obtaining receipts or otherwise providing records of his expenditure. He finally resigned at the Istanbul Olympiad without carrying out any duties, even though the federation had paid his travel expenses.

He had, however, been praised in New In Chess for having 'energised the federation' – by none other than Nigel Short. Enough said.

Justin Horton
Huesca, Spain

Disappointed

As always, thank you for all of your work on New in Chess, which is an extraordinary, beautiful and content-rich magazine. Every issue is superb!

I am writing, however, with regard to a serious complaint that I am now having with NIC. I was very glad to read that you were launching an iPad app, so that your readers can take NIC 'to go' and read it on their iPads. And I assumed that NIC readers would get the iPad version included in their current subscription price, as that is how all other periodicals work. I was therefore shocked and disappointed to see that NIC is not doing what its magazine brethren do (including the digital delivery with your subscription price), but actually were asking substantial additional monies to get the digital version as well.

Please appreciate that NIC is by far the most expensive magazine that I and my family receive, and that I have to 'justify' to myself, at every NIC renewal, why we are continuing to spend so much more on NIC than any other publication. I would ask that you please reconsider your pricing model, by (A) including NIC on iPad with the current base price, and (B) giving a discount to those who just receive NIC electronically, as that markedly reduces your printing and distribution costs.

Evan Katz,
New York, NY, USA

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Postscript Allard Hoogland

Thank you for calling New In Chess a beautiful and content-rich magazine. But is it fair to compare the price level of a publication like ours with that of mass market magazines? You claim that NIC is the only magazine that charges extra for its digital edition. This is not so. *The Economist*, *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*, to name a few, are doing the same. We cannot give the digital edition away for free, as there are considerable extra production and distribution costs. Besides, we have invested substantially in the development of our interactive digital edition.

We care about our subscribers. This year, although most of our suppliers have raised their prices, we were able to lower the price for our American subscribers with more than 8%.

A major military blunder

Zigor Alsama's photograph of the soldiers of the Karen National Liberation Army playing chess in New In Chess 2014/2 was very thought provoking, showing that chess has no borders, no prejudices and can be played by anyone, anywhere. Unfortunately upon closer inspection of the photograph a major military blunder is clearly evident. Before any battle begins, soldiers should survey and assess the actual battlefield. Had they done this with the sacred 64 squares they would have noted that they are playing with the black square in the bottom right hand corner. A blunder before a piece is even moved. Mind you – with an M-16 sub machine gun to hand I am certainly not going to be the one to tell them!

Carl Portman
Banbury, England

Checkers

It is just my opinion, but I think the KNLA soldiers on pages 6 and 7 of New In Chess 2014/2 are not playing chess, but using chess pieces to play checkers: 1) the board is turned (black square at bottom right); 2) there is a black pawn at the back rank; 3) all pieces are on dark squares.

Renato Fontinha
Valongo, Portugal

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Chess on the set

Humphrey Bogart probably ranks first on the list of famous actors with a passion for chess. It is public knowledge that 'Bogey' was a keen player, and the images of him playing chess in *Casablanca* are unforgettable. Another Hollywood legend always looking for a game was John Wayne, the Western icon who starred in such classics as *Stagecoach*, *Rio Bravo* and *The Man who shot Liberty Valance*, and won an Academy Award for his starring role in *True Grit*. Wayne played chess in various movies, and there are many photos of 'The Duke' playing games during breaks on the set, including one as a young actor against Marlene Dietrich, with whom he had a brief affair.

A young John Wayne with Marlene Dietrich, playing chess, of course.

Famous is Wayne's retort when he was told that fellow-actor Rock Hudson was a homosexual. 'Who the hell cares if he's a queer. The man plays great chess.' To which he added that he was not interested in Hudson's private life, as long as he was on the set on time every day and at the end of the day said, 'Care for a little chess, Duke?'

In *McLintock!* with Maureen O'Hara. Again, the Duke only seems to have eyes for the game.

A new biography of the Oscar-winning actor, *John Wayne, The Life and Legend*, by Scott Eyman, does not forget to tell this story, but also reveals another side of his sportsmanship. When playing his colleague Robert Mitchum, he didn't shrink back from cheating. That sounds bad (ah well, sometimes actors are not what they seem!), but when the author elaborates on Wayne's cheating, it sounds fairly innocuous. While making a move Wayne would regularly push another piece at the same time. When Mitchum finally mustered the courage to tell him that he was breaking the rules, Wayne replied: 'I was wondering when you were going to say something. Set'm up, we'll play again.'

Forty is the new Sixty

As the leading stars are getting younger and younger, the age at which a top player is supposed to be finished or over the hill, is dropping rapidly as well. Not so long ago, chess professionals could happily point at Vassily Smyslov or Viktor Kortchnoi, who were Candidates for the World Championship at the age of 64 and 60, respectively, and retain hope to peak as sexagenarians. Alas, those days seem to be gone. Forty is the new sixty and now the aging youngsters are inspired by 44-year-old Vishy Anand, who demonstrated in the Candidates' tournament that there is no reason for him to withdraw from the fight for the highest title.

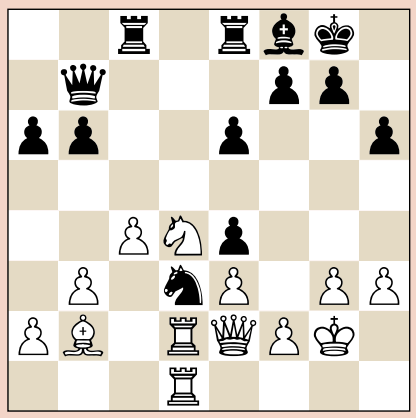
Or 45-year-old Vassily Ivanchuk. While his old rival was creating havoc in Siberia, the Legend from Lviv swept the field at the Latvian Railway Open, a rapid event in Riga. Ivanchuk burst away with nine consecutive wins, briefly calmed down with two draws and then won his final three games as well. Indeed, that adds up to 13/14. As his opponents were no pushovers, Ivanchuk's performance rating was 3059(!) and he finished way ahead of Malakhov (10), Fridman (9½) and Bologan (9). Among the GMs scoring 8½ points were Shirov, Van Wely, Kovalenko, Zhigalko, Navara and Alekseev.

Vassily Ivanchuk (45) still cannot believe that he drew two games.

There were a few instances when Ivanchuk was lucky (thank goodness!), but those moments did little to detract from a phenomenal show. This is how he outplayed top-seed Vladimir Malakhov (rapid rating 2777).

EO 40.4 – A30
Vladimir Malakhov
Vassily Ivanchuk
Riga 2014

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.b3 0-0 7.♗b2 c5 8.♘c3 d6 9.e3 ♘bd7 10.♕e2 a6 11.♖fd1 ♖e8 12.d4 cxd4 13.♖xd4 ♕c7 14.♖ad1 h6 15.♖4d2 ♖ac8 16.h3 ♗f8 17.♘d4 ♗xg2 18.♔xg2 ♕b7+ 19.♕f3 d5! 20.♔h2 The complications after 20.cxd5 ♘e5 favour Black. **20...♘e4 21.♘xe4 dxe4 22.♕e2 ♘e5 23.♔g2 ♘d3!** The octopus on d3 that became world famous after the 16th game of the 1985 Karpov-Kasparov match.



24.♗a1 b5 25.cxb5 axb5 26.♔g1 ♖c5 27.♘c2 ♖f5 28.♖f1 ♖c8 29.♖dd1 h5 30.♘e1 ♘c1! Octopus turns boa constrictor, keeping White in a lethal grip. **31.♕b2 ♖fc5 32.h4 b4 33.♕d2 ♕a6 34.♘g2 ♖c2 35.♕d7 ♕xa2 36.♗e5 ♘d3 37.♖a1 ♘xe5 38.♕xc8 ♘f3+ 39.♔h1 ♕xa1 40.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 41.♖xa1 ♖xf2** White resigned.

M&M

This year, Riga is one of the Cultural Capitals of Europe, alongside Umea in Sweden. One of the highlights of the programme in the Latvian capital (we hope) is the opera-lecture *Mikhail and Mikhail Play Chess*, based on the 6th game of the 1960 World Championship match in Moscow between Mikhail Botvinnik and Mikhail Tal.

The music was composed by Kristaps Petersons: 'The main idea was to transpose a game of chess to music, for which I created my own system, so I could bring to life this particular game (...). To this end, the chess board is divided into notes, one note per square. When a chess piece moves it creates a motif, and these motifs make up the melodic structure of the opera.'

Stage director Viesturs Meiksans chose to create the opera as a multimedia lecture with a cast of 32 (yes!) members: 14 chamber ensemble musicians, eight singers, eight dancers and two conductors. At the centre of the opera is the 'unusual phenomenon behind the popularity of chess during the Cold War.'

At the same time, it is a tribute to the genius of Tal: 'If the Americans have John Cage, who changed the perception of avant-garde music, then we have Mikhail Tal, whose symbolic victory in a match against Mikhail Botvinnik changed the way of thinking in the world of chess.'

We have no idea what *Mikhail and Mikhail Play Chess* sounds or looks like, but you may want to find out for yourself on May 23rd in the Latvian National Opera's New Hall, or on June 7th or 10th at the Riga Opera Festival.

A scene from *Mikhail and Mikhail Play Chess*.

Faster than you think

Ah, don't we love miniatures! First of all because these short or ultra-short games are often pleasing and enthralling. But even more because they mercilessly drive home the fathomless difficulty of our game. How can it be that even the most experienced practitioners suddenly slip up before the game has really gotten underway? We know why: because only very few decisions are easy and danger is looming everywhere!

LEON MUIJS

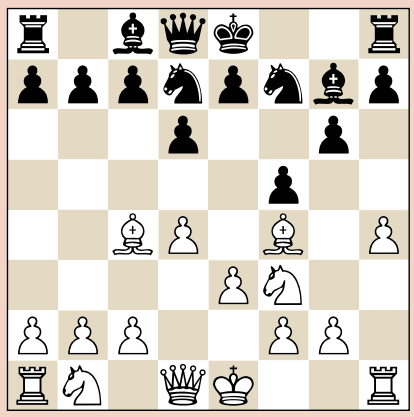
Miso Cebalo: brilliant miniature.

The following nugget was seen at the recently concluded European Senior Team Championship in Sibenik, Croatia, which was won by Russia (with four GMs on board: Dvoirys, Gleizerov, Gavrilov and Balashov).

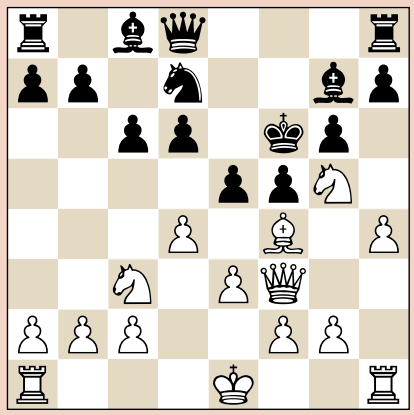
White is Miso Cebalo from Croatia, Senior World Champion in 2009. Black is Evgeny Vasiukov, who played on the second Russian team. Both are grandmasters and between them they have studied chess for more than a hundred years. Still, after a mere 13 moves it's over, as Black has to resign with mate in one coming.

HD 12.13 – A80
Miso Cebalo
Evgeny Vasiukov
Sibenik 2014

1.d4 f5 2.♗g5 g6 3.e3 ♘h6 An original way to chase away the bishop on g5. **4.h4 ♘f7 5.♗f4 d6 6.♘f3 ♘d7** The normal move would seem to be 6...♗g7. **7.♗c4 ♗g7?** A serious mistake that is harshly punished.



8.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 9.♘g5+ ♔f6 10.♘c3 White has an overwhelming position. And, mind you, he didn't sacrifice anything on f7, he just exchanged a piece. **10...c6 11.♕f3!** With the concrete threat of 12.♘ce4+ fxe4 13.♗e5 mate. **11...e5** This invites a brilliant reply.



12.♕d5! The queen cannot be taken because of a unique mate with two knights, but Black has no defence against the double mating threat either. **12...♕e7** Stops the white queen from giving mate, but... **13.♘xh7+!** And as the bishop will give mate on the next move, Black resigned. ■

Khanty-Mansiysk

KIRILL MERKURIEV

Amazing

The predictions for the Candidates' tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk verged on the monotonous. Of course, upsets could never be excluded, but was there anyone who doubted that in actual fact there were only two favourites? Who else but the world's number two, Levon Aronian, or Vladimir Kramnik, the glorious winner of the World Cup, would be in a position to earn the right to challenge World Champion Magnus Carlsen? Funnily enough (in hindsight), Vishy Anand was not even seen as one of the dark horses. Who could have imagined that the dethroned world champion would suddenly wake up from his hibernation and secure the right to a rematch? Let's be honest. No one. And that's what makes the Indian's victory in Siberia one of the most amazing comebacks in modern chess. Our man-on-the-spot, **Vladimir Barsky**, tells the story.

PHOTOS: VLADIMIR BARSKY

Anand

The venue of the Candidates' tournament was the futuristic Yugra Chess Academy. While for three weeks eight elite grandmasters decided who is going to challenge Magnus Carlsen for the world title, the spectator part was almost the exclusive domain of the players' seconds and companions.

Almost imperceptibly, but very powerfully, Twitter has entered our lives and become an irreplaceable friend and advisor. So, just before flying to the opening of the Candidates' tournament your correspondent read a short post that was made by Sergey Karjakin's girlfriend, something like, 'There isn't just a lot of snow in Khanty-Mansiysk, but a real blizzard.' And I became downcast, of course: in Moscow the past winter had been surprisingly warm, but in Siberia there can be all kinds of things in March; the locals say that it isn't unusual for the temperature to be as low as minus 30. Fortunately, when we arrived in the capital of Yugra my annoyance changed to acceptance: it was about zero and sunny, and the puddles splashed joyfully under my feet. This continued for almost two weeks, then it suddenly got much colder, snow fell, and on the day of my departure a strong wind also blew up. My flight was delayed for several hours; you could say that we got out of the frosty Russian winter by a miracle, although the calendar already said it was April 1.

I'm laying it on a bit thick, of course, and the players probably didn't experience that much discomfort as a result of the climate.

> Karjakin's girlfriend tweeted: 'There isn't just a lot of snow in Khanty-Mansiysk, but a real blizzard.'

Warmth-loving Anand merely had to sharply reduce the length of his walks; besides that, he was the only one who regularly came to the playing hall by car, although you could walk there in five to seven minutes. The Indian grandmaster was staying in the four-star Taray hotel, which is located right in the city centre. The organizers provided each player with two rooms and full board. Vladimir Kramnik, Levon Aronian, Dmitry Andreikin, Sergey Karjakin and Peter Svidler also stayed in the Taray. Veselin Topalov preferred the five-star Yugorskaya Dolina hotel, which is on the outskirts, virtually on the taiga.

The main advantage of the Yugorskaya Dolina is its excellent business centre and large swimming pool, sauna and baths with healing waters from a thermal spring. It's quite possible that Veselin chose the hotel specifically due to these considerations. At least, on one of the days Silvio Danailov published a photo on Twitter in which Topalov and his assistants were shown in the pool.

Finally, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov stayed in a spacious flat in the city centre that the local Azerbaijani diaspora provided for him.

A few words about who helped whom at the tournament. Grand-

masters Tigran Gharamian (Armenia) and Maxim Rodshtein (Israel), plus a doctor, came with Levon Aronian. Zahar Efimenko (Ukraine) and a masseur accompanied Vladimir Kramnik. Veselin Topalov brought his manager Silvio Danailov and two assistants. Vishy Anand came with his compatriot Sandipan Chanda (it was a little strange not to see Anand's wife Aruna alongside him, but she didn't go to Khanty-Mansiysk). Sergey Karjakin was with his girlfriend Galiya, grandmaster Rustam Kasimdzhanov (Uzbekistan), his physical trainer and his manager. Peter Svidler came with his wife, but a few days later she had to go home to their children, so his second arrived – the young grandmaster from St. Petersburg Maxim Matlakov. In the second half of the tournament, when Peter's play had gone somewhat off the rails, his wife Olga flew back again.

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov was assisted by Alexander Khalifman (Russia), Rauf Mamedov and Eltaj Safarli (both from Azerbaijan), and also his manager. Finally, Dmitry Andreikin acquired a second for almost the first time in his life – he was assisted by international master Nikita Matinian (Russia). Previously, Dima was always accompanied by his wife Svetlana, but this time she stayed home for a respectable reason: shortly before the start a daughter had been born into the young family. According to Dmitry, this happy event unquestionably influenced his preparation for the tournament, but on the other hand during it he had a huge amount of positive emotions every evening when he had long sessions with his wife and daughter on Skype.

The Candidates' tournament took place within the walls of the Yugra Chess Academy, which has already hosted, for example, the 2011 World Cup and the 2012 Women's World Championship. In the opinion of Vishy Anand, who was in Khanty-Mansiysk for the first time, the building was ideal for small tournaments; but he couldn't work out how there could have been room for the 128 players in the World Cup. It was fine, there's nothing wrong with being close! Besides, two days later there were 64 left, and in another two, 32, and then the hall became completely free and spacious.

The organizers didn't go as far as putting up a glass partition that was opaque on the stage side, but limited themselves to installing jammers on the first floor that killed all radio signals. Which brings to mind an amusing scene that your correspondent observed before the start of the second round. About a minute before the clocks were started Veselin Topalov suddenly started waving his hands energetically in the direction of the spectators' hall, clearly trying to get someone out, then went up to the barrier that divided the players from the fans and continued his gesticulating. It turned out that he was trying to get his assistant to move from the front row to the back row. It involuntarily brought to mind the story of how during the legendary 1978 match in Baguio Viktor Kortchnoi's team tried in vain to move Dr. Zukhar from the fourth row to somewhere in the gallery. However, in Khanty-Mansiysk these were 'gestures of goodwill'. But not only. Another time Topalov, on the contrary, showed himself to be a harsh 'overseer': he approached the chief arbiter, Panagiotis Nikolopoulos (Greece) and demanded that he ban Peter Svidler from talking to his second after he had been through the metal detector. For a long time Peter couldn't understand what the problem was, but he didn't argue.

'Veselin Topalov suddenly started waving his hands energetically in the direction of the spectators' hall, clearly trying to get someone out.'

There weren't many spectators in the playing hall, although there are chess lessons in many Khanty-Mansiysk schools. It turned out that the academy's administration had decided not to let children into the hall, in case they made too much noise. Later at one of the press conferences Dmitry Andreikin expressed surprise at the fact that chess was taught in Khanty-Mansiysk but there were no children in the hall, and some young spectators appeared. We should give them their due: they behaved with great restraint, watching the play by the stars of the first rank with interest.

I'll remind you that the time control was two hours for 40 moves, then one hour for 20 moves and 15 minutes to the end of the game, with an increment of 30 seconds per move, starting from the 61st. Unlike at London 2013, no one ran out of time, although Sergey Karjakin got into severe time trouble a couple of times. After his second game against Mamedyarov he even publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the time control without the 30-second increment right from the start, calling it 'stupid'.

In the case of shared first place the winner was to be determined by these additional indices: 1) personal encounters, 2) number of wins, 3) Sonneborn-Berger score. After London there were quite a few discussions about how absurd this system was and that if first place was shared there should be a tiebreak, but things stayed just as they were. The topic came up at one of the press conferences in the presence of Kramnik, who had suffered from it a year earlier. Vladimir said that at first, as soon

as he saw the new contract with the old stupid point in it, he immediately wanted to write a protest to FIDE. But then he decided to do an experiment and find out if anyone would be upset or not. Seeing that no one else gave a hoot, he decided not to waste his efforts and time either tilting at windmills.

Half of the eight players represented one country, and in accordance with another questionable FIDE rule a theatrical draw was held a month before the start with the condition that the Russians had to play each other in the first half of both the round-robin cycles, and not at the end. This is what Alexander Grischuk, who wasn't one of the Candidates this time, said about the situation: 'We'll be open – this rule was conceived not for Russia, but for some of the other countries. In our case it doesn't have any real influence on anything. Although I often run into idiots on the Internet who are still convinced that in London Svidler and I "nobbled" Kramnik. Basically, the rule is stupid, of course, as you can nobble a foreigner as successfully as a compatriot.'

Before the start the majority of experts (including Garry Kasparov) named Levon Aronian and Vladimir Kramnik as the main favourites, while many quickly placed Vishy Anand in reserve: he has been playing very unevenly in the past few years, and lost the World Championship without winning a game. But it seems this whitewash defeat by Magnus Carlsen fired him up, and he finally woke up from his hibernation! Levon Aronian was the first person to find this out.

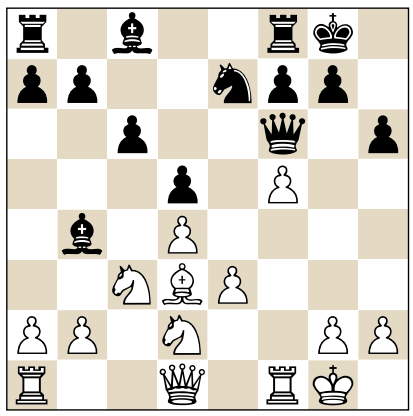
It's possible that the pawn sacrifice Aronian offered in the opening was completely correct, but subsequently he played very 'abstractly'. Vishy didn't get greedy and gave the pawn back, receiving a solid advantage in the ending in return.

This was the first key moment in the tournament, which left its mark on everything else that happened in the race. And although Aronian joked at first that in order for him to have a good performance he always had to lose at the start, he gradually lost his ability to joke. Vishy tore ahead and led from the first round to the last. Levon was hot on his heels and caught up with him after the seventh round, but after the ninth, when Anand won and Aronian lost, their paths diverged again.

We'll continue describing the course of the tournament battle in the style of Twitter: next up is key moment No. 2.

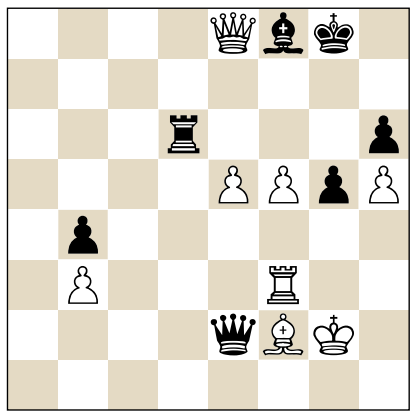
KIRILL MERKURIEV

Round 1 press conference. While Levon Aronian is trying to come to terms with a big blow, Vishy Anand is careful not to show his delight about his great start.



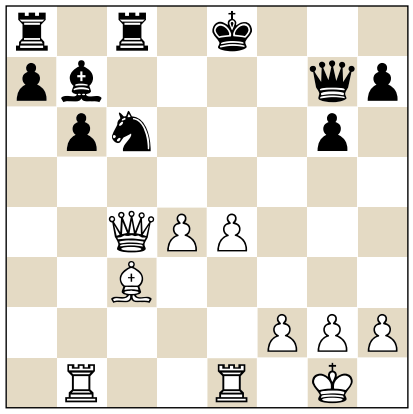
Aronian-Mamedyarov
Round 2
position after 13... ♘e7

'Blunder your queen, pal!'
14.♘de4!
This opening catastrophe knocked Mamedyarov off balance for a few days – in the next round he lost again to Anand. But he was able to pull himself together and come back to the 50-percent mark, and then...
But let's first look at key moment No. 3.



Svidler-Kramnik
Round 3
position after 46. gxf5

Tanks aren't afraid of mud
46...♖f6!!
The saving miracle that Kramnik found made a strong impression on Peter Svidler: it seemed that after this he temporarily stopped believing in his lucky star. If he had won, the St. Petersburg player would have scored 2½ out of 3, and an inspired Svidler is capable of any feats... And, possibly, there wouldn't have been the overreach in the following game.



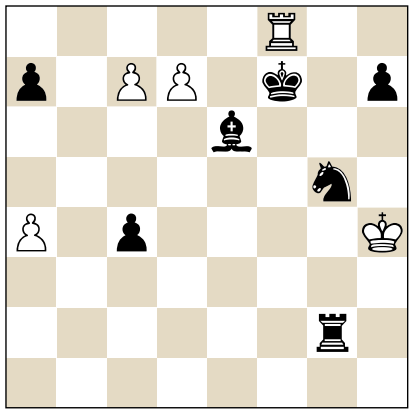
Aronian-Svidler
Round 4
position after 27.♗c3

Cowards don't play ice hockey
27...♘d8?!

The sharp opening duel transformed into a psychological one. In his favourite Grünfeld Defence Peter Svidler employed an important theoretical novelty on the 21st move. Aronian reacted in the most principled way: he sacrificed a piece, chasing the black king into the centre. The position in the diagram is a kind of 'moment of truth' – Black can give the piece back with 27...♘xd4 and switch to an approximately equal ending, or continue the battle for three results. Peter thought for a long time and opted for the latter. One move later he didn't want to part with the exchange, and after seven more White's position with two connected passed pawns had become so formidable that the St. Petersburg player gave up his knight just to force an exchange of queens. But that variation turned out to be far worse.

At the press conference Svidler, returning to the key moment in the game, admitted that he should have given the piece back immediately:

'I thought about that possibility for a very long time, but in the end I decided that... cowards don't play ice hockey! Black's a piece up, after all, and I obviously can't lose by force. I regretted that decision more than once during the course of the game.'



Kramnik-Mamedyarov
Round 7
position after 48.♖f8

The new adventures of Shakh
48...♔xf8??

An unbelievable, crazy game! After the opening White got a huge strategic advantage, but he rushed to force events. Mamedyarov defended brilliantly and was able to create dangerous counterplay against the enemy king. Vladimir admitted later: 'Before the time control I couldn't understand whether I should be playing for a win

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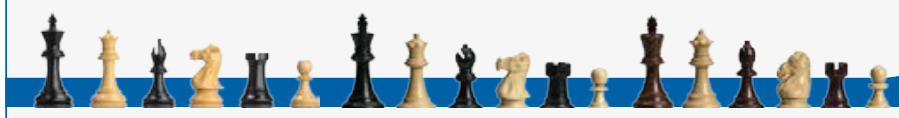

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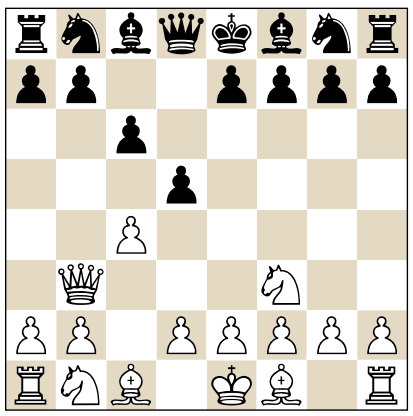
or a draw, the position that had arisen was so crazy. After letting go of my big advantage I was at a loss. But after the time control, of course, I already realized that I had to fight for a draw.'

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov: 'I saw that I could always make a draw, and I was trying to win. But I made such a terrible blunder... I have no words even!'

It's curious that Shakh made the losing move almost without thinking. If he'd moved his king to g6 he'd have won the game. But Mamedyarov didn't come unstuck even after that fateful blow: in the second round-robin cycle he won one game and drew the rest. Enviable strength of character!



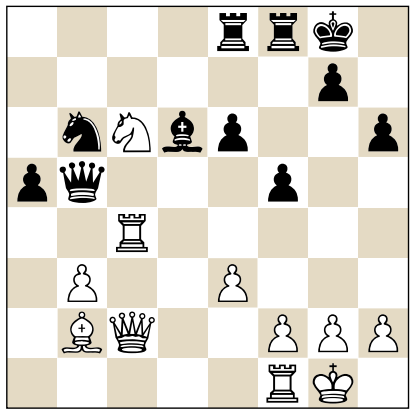
Aronian-Anand
Round 8
position after 3.♕b3

Heresy

Aronian was trying to get revenge for his defeat in the first stage and chose a very strange queen thrust to b3. In reply Anand sacrificed a pawn, solidly seizing the initiative and quickly making a draw in a position of strength. Interestingly, at one of the press conferences Kramnik and Andreikin expressed their opinions about Aronian's novelty. Vladimir laughed, 'This queen move also came into my head, but it's such heresy that I wouldn't even play it in rapid chess! I have an entire goldmine of these kinds of ideas, enough to last until the end of my career! The final position in their game is in Black's favour – he has free play, and White has a kind of pathetic, useless pawn. I would have been happy to make a draw as White in that position.'

Dmitry Andreikin was more serious: 'I was impressed by Anand's reply to the novelty; I think he was ready for this plan, strange as it may seem.'

It's unquestionably worth listening to Dmitry's opinion, as he hasn't yet completely learned the 'little tricks' of his more experienced rivals, when a person thinks one thing, says another, and does a third. But if Anand really was ready for Aronian's 'offbeat' move, then the Indian grandmaster's home preparation deserves admiration!



Kramnik-Svidler
Round 10
position after 31... ♘b6

Levelling out the unfairness of chess

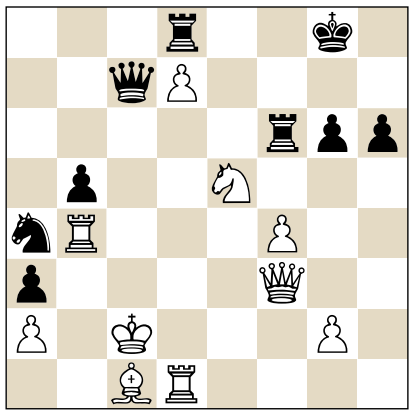
32.♖d4?? ♗xh2+!

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Round 3 press conference. While Peter Svidler ('You rarely receive gifts like the one I got today') has his say, Vladimir Kramnik is at a loss about his second blunder in two days.

'Of course, you rarely receive gifts like the one I got today', Peter Svidler admitted at the post-match press conference. His opponent Vladimir Kramnik shrugged his shoulders indifferently, lacking the strength to find a rational explanation for his two crude blunders in his games against Karjakin in the previous round and the latest one against Svidler: 'Tiredness is probably to blame. Although apparently I feel fine physically, and I have no problems with my health. I can't understand what's going on.'

The two blunders in a row buried Kramnik's hopes of winning in Khanty-Mansiysk. But before that he had been lucky to some degree. Old masters believe that a certain 'levelling out of the unfairness of chess' exists: sometimes you get lucky, and sometimes your opponent does, but overall it turns out equal in the long run. But perhaps that isn't the case and there are charmed chess players who accumulate all the 'collective luck', and there are also unlucky ones? I don't think this important topic has been studied enough yet!



Anand-Andreikin
Round 12
position after 40.... ♘a4+

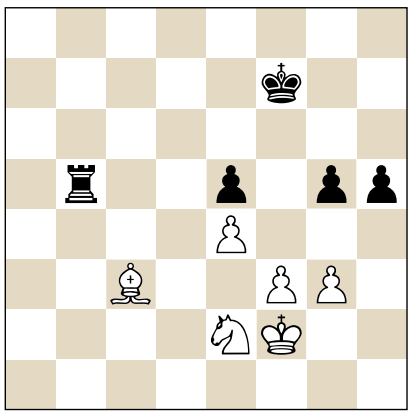
Good vibrations

41.♔b3 and a draw by repetition. When grandmasters take their food, it's a creative process. Some eat in their rooms, some prefer to just play hungry. Those who came for lunch in the Taray hotel restaurant usually dressed as if they were at home. After fortifying themselves the players changed their clothes and went to their games. Vishy Anand usually followed a ritual: he came to lunch already dressed up and with his second tried to take the same table for two that he'd somehow spotted at the beginning of the tournament.

On the day of Round 12 we had lunch at the same time. Anand looked particularly smart – in black trousers and a white shirt – and even agreed to wait a while for the waiters to get his 'lucky' table ready. It was clear from all this that Anand was in a serious mood. The previous day, during a joint press conference by Anand and Kramnik, one of the journalists quoted some semi-fantastical scenarios that had appeared on the Internet in which first place could slip out of the Indian grandmaster's hands, and they asked Anand what he thought about that. While the journalist was asking the question in Russian, Kramnik turned to his comrade-in-arms and said in English with a smile: 'Oh, great question! You'll like it!' After listening to the translation Vishy laughed, 'You're describing some nightmare scenario to me, but I'm sleeping peacefully here, fortunately!'

However, Vishy didn't let things drift, but tried to take the bull by the horns in the very next round, in his 'white' game against Dmitry Andreikin. Anand used a powerful novelty in the Caro-Kann, 'following in the footsteps' of one of his match games against Carlsen, and got a decisive advantage. But when his goal was already close, Anand started worrying and allowed his devilishly nimble opponent to launch complications. Dmitry gave up a knight, forcing the white king to take a short walk in the centre of the board. Anand repeated the position a couple of times to win time to think, then decided to avoid any further risk and agreed a draw. For his reasons I gladly refer to the interview with Anand in this issue.

Vishy laughed, 'You're describing some nightmare scenario to me, but I'm sleeping peacefully here, fortunately!'



Karjakin-Anand
Round 13
position after 47... ♖b5

Caissa's smile

After his 'timid' draw in the previous round there were discussions about whether or not Caissa would forgive Anand or definitely punish him. Indeed, the next day the ex-world champion got a difficult position (for the first and last time in the tournament!) against Sergey Karjakin. But then the chess goddess showed mercy on her loyal knight after all: after **48.g4? h4** winning the g5-pawn (on which Karjakin was counting) leads to a drawn pawn ending. By saving himself Anand secured himself an early victory in the tournament. That day he was particularly talkative, and your correspondent took advantage of this and asked him what had made him decide to play in the Candidates' tournament. To which he replied: 'In December last year I played in the London Rapid. My long-time colleague Vladimir Kramnik was also there (and, by the way, beat me, but that isn't important). On one of the days he lost a bad game to Nakamura, and I decided to support Vlad – I called him and suggested having dinner together. But it all turned out the other way around: Vladimir started asking why I didn't want to play in the Candidates' tournament, and trying to persuade me that I had a good chance of taking first place. Soon after that conversation I finally decided that I had to play!'

The last round was notable for the epic battle between Aronian and Karjakin, which lasted for seven hours and cost over 60,000 euros. Judge for yourselves – here's how the prize fund was distributed:

1st place – € 135,000
2nd place – € 125,000
3rd place – € 107,000
4th place – € 78,000
5th place – € 58,000
6th place – € 40,000
7th place – € 32,000
8th place – € 25,000

Karjakin won and took second place outright, while Aronian slipped back to sixth.

Sergey failed in the first stage (five draws and two losses), but confidently

won the second: three wins and four draws, with winning chances in every game without exception. Sergey did an enormous amount of preparatory work and formed a battle-worthy team of like-minded people (I'll name another two of his trainers – grandmasters Yury Dokhoian and Alexander Motylev). He was playing in a Candidates' tournament for the first time and immediately won the silver – a more than worthy result.

Vladimir Kramnik wasn't happy with his 'bronze', of course. But he himself honestly admitted that he didn't play well enough to win first place in this tournament: he made 'unforced errors' too often, and lost his games against Karjakin and Svidler because of crude one-move blunders. Hikaru Nakamura sympathized with the Russian on Twitter: 'Sad to watch what's going on with Kramnik. Very strongly reminds me of my own performance at Wijk aan Zee, where I was playing normally and then suddenly blundered.'

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and Dmitry Andreikin, who, like Kramnik, scored 50 percent, demonstrated impeccable fighting qualities: they both started the tournament badly, on 'minus two', but then gathered strength and recovered what they'd lost.

Peter Svidler's play made a very strong impression, especially in the first half of the event: it was assertive, aggressive and uncompromising. Peter had seriously broadened his opening repertoire (he played the Paulsen System and the Dutch Defence as Black, for example), and tried to win no matter what colour he had. For now, unfortunately, not everything has worked, but improving yourself is always a guarantee of success in future. He can take an example from his fellow St. Petersburg player Viktor Lvovich Kortchnoi, who continued to progress after he was 40. And Peter is still only 37 – there's nothing to say at all!

The tournament ratings favourite Levon Aronian, alas, again disappointed his multitude of fans (and there were a lot of them in Khanty-Mansiysk; he regularly played football and tennis with his Armenian friends). But selection tournaments aren't working out for Aronian, as if their status ties his hands and feet. In the second half his play gradually broke down, and Levon clearly conducted his last two games beneath his level. Although, of course, we won't belittle the achievements of his opponents – Andreikin and Karjakin –, who honestly deserved their wins.

Veselin Topalov closed out the table. He was wonderfully prepared theoretically and physically, but he often miscalculated at the board, and that gave rise to a lack of confidence in his strength and, as a result, excess caution. Veselin can record in his assets column a win against his old enemy Vladimir Kramnik in the first half; but in the second the Russian took a victorious revenge. As usual the ex-world champions refused the traditional handshake, but this circumstance no longer provokes any interest among the public or journalists.

There's an old tradition in Khanty-Mansiysk: the winners of biathlon championships do a victory lap around the stadium sitting in a carriage pulled by reindeer. This year they decided to expand the tradition to chess and suggested that Viswanathan Anand should ride with the northern beauties. The Indian guest couldn't refuse this exotic experiment.

Your correspondent travelled from the Taray hotel to the Filipenko Winter Sports Centre with the ex-world champion. On the way I tried to take on the role of tour guide, but Anand interrupted: 'Oh, I know this place: there's a portrait of Jakovenko there!'

Indeed, we were going past the Alley of Sporting Glory, which is decorated with portraits of famous sportspeople from Yugra. The European and world champion on the Russian chess team Dmitry Jakovenko was born in Nizhnevartovsk. There is also a photograph of Maria Sharapova, who was born in the town of Nyagan.

In the stadium they put traditional Khanty clothes on Anand and sat him in the carriage. Vishy was slightly constrained at first, but then got used to it, and instead of doing one victory lap, did five. And then happily took some shots with a biathlon rifle, knocking down several targets from lying and standing positions. Preparation for the match against Magnus Carlsen has begun!

VLADIMIR BARSKY

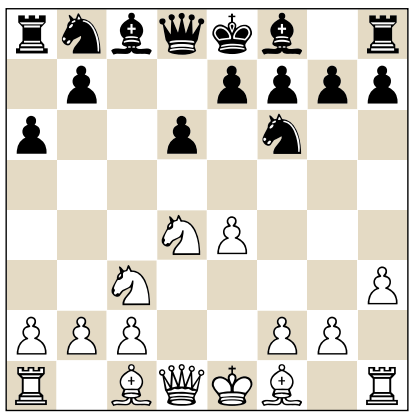
Vishy Anand did five victory laps in a carriage pulled by reindeer and then happily took some shots with a biathlon rifle. Preparation for the match against Magnus Carlsen has begun!

Khanty-Mansiysk

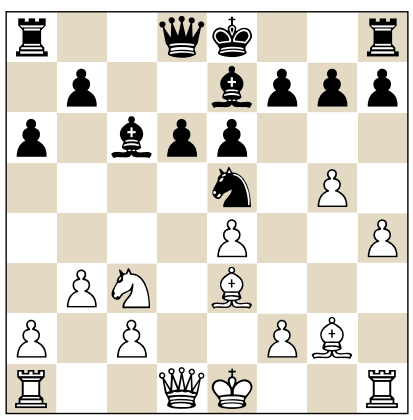
NOTES BY
Vishy Anand

SI 14.12 – B81
Vishy Anand
Veselin Topalov
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (9)

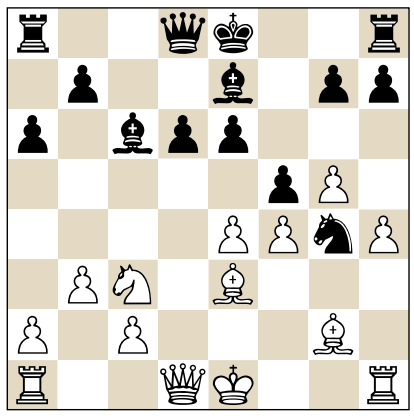
1.e4 c5
Before this game, Levon and me were running neck and neck. I had spent some time checking Topalov's game against Svidler and the Najdorf.
2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.h3
The only argument against this move was that Topalov had played it with white against Mamedyarov the previous day, but in the end, I decided to go with it.



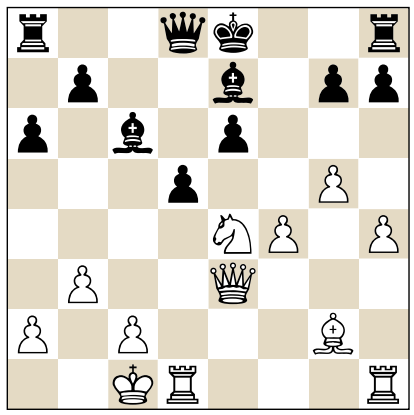
6...e6
Shakhriyar had played 6...g6, but I assumed Veselin would go for this.
7.g4 ♘fd7 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.h4 ♘de5 11.g5 ♗d7 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.b3
A bit weakening, but I wanted to stop ...♘c4.



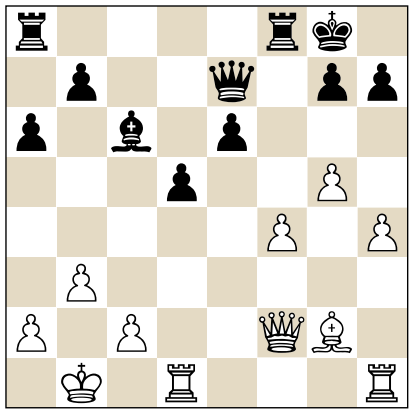
13...f5
I was happy to see this, since I felt this weakened the e6-pawn.
14.f4 ♘g4



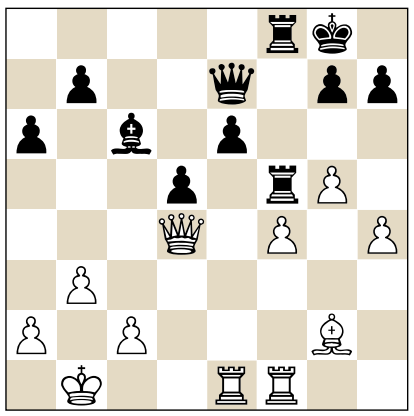
15.♕e2
Since the Black's dark-squared bishop cannot easily come to the long diagonal, I was ready to give up the bishop pair.
Instead, 15.♗d2 0-0 16.♕e2 d5 17. exf5 exf5 18.0-0-0 ♔h8 is messier.
15...♘xe3 16.♕xe3 fxe4 17.0-0-0 d5 18.♘xe4



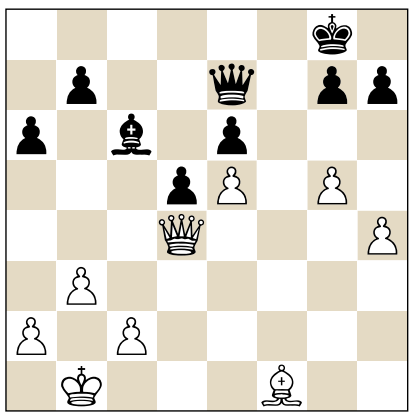
18...♗a3+
18...♕a5 is trickier than we both thought at the board: 19.♘c3 (19.♘d6+ ♔f8 20.♕xe6 ♕a3+ 21.♔b1 ♕xd6 22.♕f5+, and the king being stuck in the centre means that White has enough for the piece) 19...0-0 20.♕xe6+ ♔h8. Here the comp points out that White has to be extremely precise: 21.♔b1! (21.♕xe7? ♖fe8! 22.♕d6 ♖ad8) 21...♕xc3 (21...♖fe8 22.♕h3!, and White is winning) 22.♕xe7 ♖fe8, and now only 23.♖h3! gives White an edge.
19.♔b1 ♕e7 20.♘f2!
Rerouting to e5.
20...♗c5 21.♕g3 ♗xf2 22.♕xf2 0-0



23.♕d4! I was happy here, since I saw the upcoming bishop ending was pleasant for White.
23...♖f5 24.♖de1!
24.♗h3 is met by 24...e5.
After 24.♖hf1 ♖af8 25.♗h3 e5 26.fxe5 ♖xe5 27.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 28.♖f1+ ♔g8 it is not clear how the presence of rooks will help White.
24...♖af8 25.♖hf1



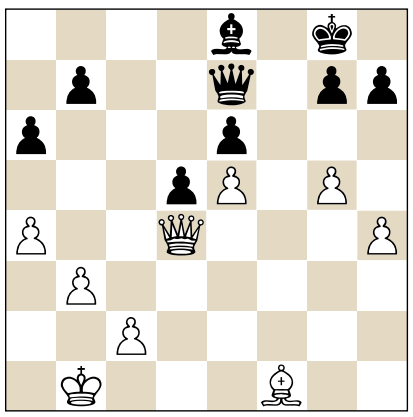
25...♕d6 Black cannot wait due to the threat of ♗h3.
26.♖e5 ♖xe5
After 26...♗e8 27.♖xf5 ♖xf5 28.♗h3 e5 29.♕e3! Black is lost.
27.fxe5 ♖xf1+ 28.♗xf1 ♕e7



29.a4 Also a good move, but... 29.♗h3! was my first intention and

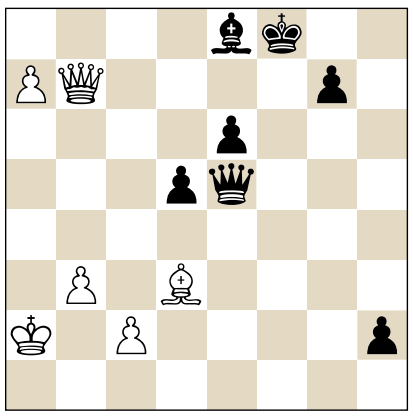
it's simpler, since it stops Black rerouting his bishop to g6. However, I saw that 30.♕a7 was very strong and decided to go for it.

29...♗e8



30.♔b2?

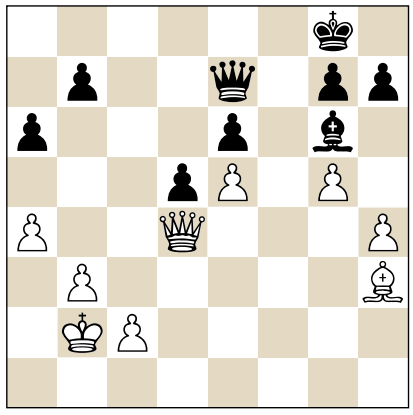
I wanted to play 30.♕a7!, but suddenly began to be doubtful about the pawn race. As the comp shows, my doubts were mistaken, White wins easily: 30...♕b4 31.♕b8 ♔f8 32.♔a2 ♕xh4 (the comp defends this way: 32...♕b6 33.h5 ♔e7 34.♗d3 g6, but this must be nice for White) 33.♕xb7 ♕xg5 34.♗xa6 ♕xe5 (34...h5 35.♕b8 h4 36.♗b5 ♕e7 37.a5 h3 38.a6 h2 39.a7 h1♕ 40.a8♕, and wins) 35.♗d3 h5 36.a5 h4 (36...♕d6, taking the queen back, runs into 37.a6 ♗c6 38.♕c8+ ♔f7 39.a7 ♕e7 40.♕b8!, followed by 41.♗b5) 37.a6 (37.♕b4+ is the easiest win, simply collecting the pawn. Even the text wins, albeit with another intermezzo) 37...h3 38.a7 h2



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

39.♕b8! (this is important – 39.a8♕ h1♕ is indeed a draw) 39...♕xb8 (or 39...♕h5 40.a8♕ h1♕ 41.♕d6+, winning) 40.axb8♕ h1♕ 41.♗g6, and now White wins the bishop.

30...♗g6 31.♗h3

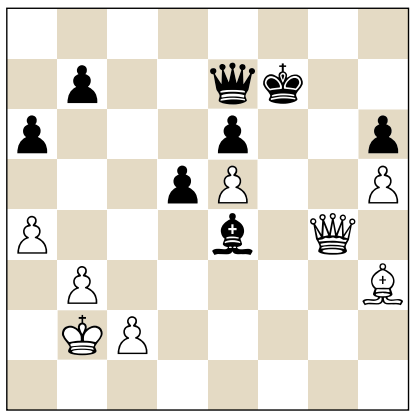


31...h6? It only took me a few seconds to see the zugzwang, and now I was quite excited. After 31...♗e4 Black is still worse, but it is hard to see how White will break through.

32.gxh6 gxh6 33.♕g4 ♔f7 34.h5

And that's it.

34...♗e4

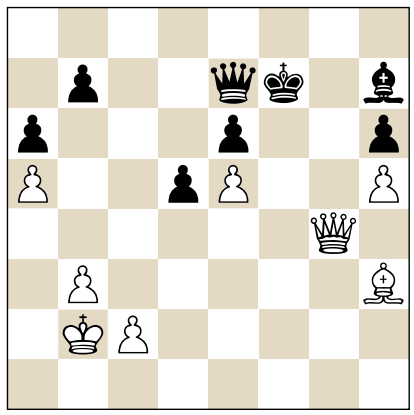


Here I saw the next zugzwang coming! After 34...♗f5, what I suspect he had initially overlooked is that 35.♕f4 ♕g5 loses: 36.♕xg5 hxg5 37.♗xf5 exf5 38.h6, and the black king will be unable to stop both pawns.

35.a5

This move is vital; it fixes Black's queenside and makes the bishop the only piece that can move. The black queen is needed to protect both the e6-pawn and the f6-square.

35...♗h7



36.c3!!

A very nice move to be able to make.

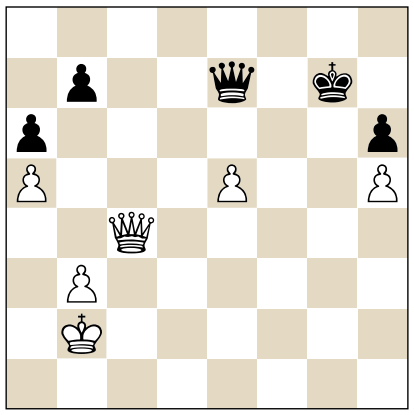
36...♗e4 37.c4

And now that Black cannot capture, there is nothing else but:

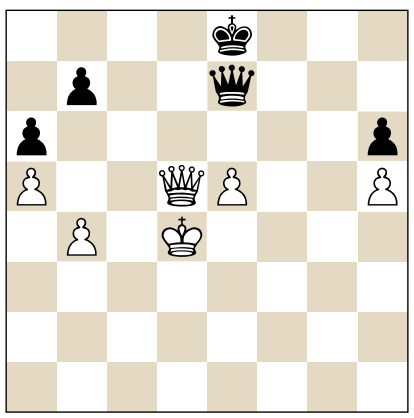
37...♗f5 38.♕f4 dxc4 39.♗xf5 exf5 40.♕xf5+ ♔e8 41.♕c8+ ♔f7 42.♕xc4+ ♔g7

VLADIMIR BARSKY

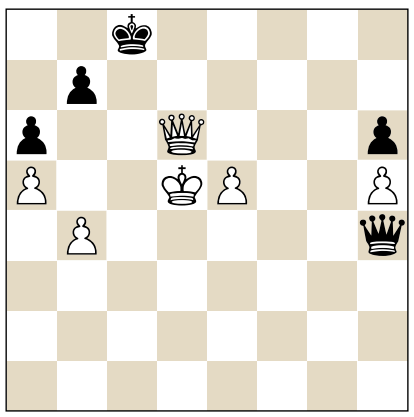
Veselin Topalov and Vishy Anand lost in thought before the game that would pave the way to another World Championshiop match for the Indian. As in Mexico in 2007 he decisively increased his lead in Round 9.



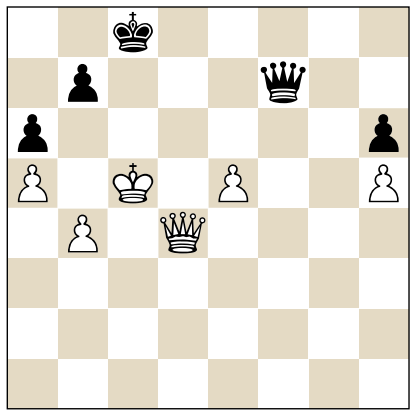
43.♕d5!
Black's king is still trapped on the two back ranks.
43...♔f8 44.♔c3 ♔e8 45.b4 ♕c7+ 46.♔d4 ♕e7



47.♕g8+ 47.♕d6 ♕h4+ 48.♔c5 was far simpler. **47...♔d7 48.♔d5 ♔c7** Now White has to be precise. **49.♕g6! ♕h4** 49...♕xb4 50.♕d6+ ♕xd6+ 51.exd6+ wins easily. **50.♕d6+ ♔c8**



51.♔c5! The white king now breaks through via b6.
51...♕f2+ Or 51...♕xh5 52.♔b6 ♕f7 53.e6 ♕f2+ 54.♕c5+ ♕xc5+ 55.bxc5 h5 56.e7 ♔d7 57.♔xb7, and White is faster.
52.♕d4 ♕f7

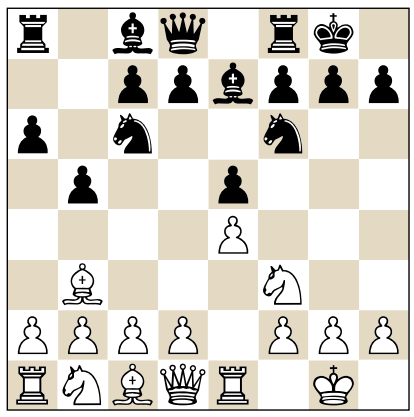


53.♕c4! Now White's king can move with check. A blunder was 53.♔b6?? ♕c7+ 54.♔a7 b5+.
53...♕g7 54.♔b6+ ♔b8 55.♕c5 ♕f7 56.♕d6+ ♔c8 57.e6
Topalov resigned, leaving me in clear first place, one point ahead of Aronian.

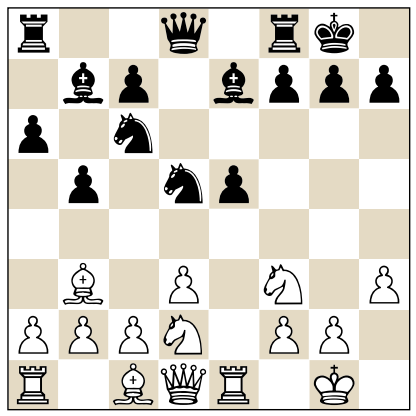
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

RL 17.2 – C88
Vishy Anand
Levon Aronian
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (1)

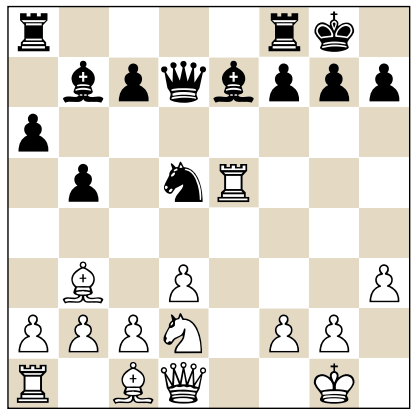
Every triumph starts with the beginning, and in a chess tournament it is often that key game that determines the final outcome. In Khanty this time, that key game was played right in the first round.
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0
Levon stays truthful to his Marshall, which he doesn't want to give up, even for the Berlin Defence, which he also plays on occasion.



8.h3 ♗b7 9.d3 This used to be the main anti-Marshall, until people realized that it doesn't really stop the pawn sacrifice. **9...d5! 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘bd2** Anand had already played this position before, without great success, losing to Caruana. He had probably found some improvement.



11...♕d7!? An interesting novelty in the spirit of the opening. I have played this line myself with white and know that it is one of those novelties you find, not because you really need it to equalize, but because of the 'why-not' rule. I believe the good old 11...f6 is totally fine as well.
12.♘xe5?! This allows a dangerous piece sacrifice, which didn't happen in the game. Instead, White should have played some thematic move like 12.a4 or 12.♘f1.
12...♘xe5 13.♖xe5



13...♘f6?! Played within eight seconds (I looked it up ☺). Quite dramatic, to play a novelty on move 11 and miss a spectacular knight sacrifice two moves later.
He could have played 13...♘f4! 14.♘f3 (14.♘e4 gets White into trouble after the simple 14...♘g6!, when

> continued on page 29

Chennai Airport was all smiles as Vishy Anand returned to a hero's welcome.

'It's really beautiful, because it came completely unexpectedly and is way beyond anything I could have dreamed of.'

Once again the Indian press was out in force to question Vishy Anand, but how different it was this time. On his return to Chennai, they no longer wanted to know if the end of his career was near or whether he considered quitting chess. All they wanted was to revel in the deposed World Champion's miraculous resurrection in Khanty-Mansiysk and to speculate about his chances in the new world title match against Magnus Carlsen later this year. Amid a hectic schedule of interviews and official meetings, Anand spoke to **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** about his dazzling comeback. 'After the match I think I disliked chess for a while.'

His home-coming was heart-warming. Well-wishers sent touching messages, the first press conference was packed with beaming journalists and like anyone else, Vishy Anand himself was happy and relieved: 'It's also nice that for once your fans don't have to listen to your whining and your explanations, but can simply enjoy your result.' But the first thing he mentions when we speak on Skype two days after his return to India is that his son Akhil, one week shy of his third birthday, was at the airport. 'He was very excited to see my photo and then to see the real thing (laughs). He is generally happy to see me and knows something exciting is happening, but it's not that he has any idea what I did.' Anand knows that the next days are going to be hectic too, but this time he couldn't care less. 'I am not complaining'.

This must be one of the happiest wins in your career. Not because you haven't won anything bigger, but because finally, after a couple of troublesome years, you played a completely solid tournament again.
'Yeah, obviously. This is my second win after Baden, but this is a good result with no further explanations, just a good result full stop. On top of that it's the Candidates', and as a bonus I get to play the world title match. And it came in such unexpected fashion. It is not like there was any trend in Zurich that I was continuing, it just came... It's really beautiful, because it came completely unexpectedly and is way beyond anything I could have dreamed of.'

You didn't blame anyone who was pessimistic about your chances before the tournament?
'I did not even read or speak to anyone. It was not difficult to imagine what people would forecast, but fine, I went there hoping for a good result. Which meant somewhere in the top three and come back with a feeling that I had played good chess. This is even at the higher end of that.'

Because it went amazingly smoothly.
'Basically, yeah. Already after the first half people started saying that I was the only one who had not had a bad position so far. You'd realize this and then of course you wanted to forget about it as quickly as possible and get back to the board. It just got better and better. And then it started to resemble Mexico (the World Championship tournament that he won in 2007 – DJtG) as well. In Mexico my lead also grew in the 9th round. And I had this difficult game in the 13th. And there was a Marshall in the 14th, so...'

At least there was something predictable...
'(Laughs) Something like this.'

Have things become clearer for you after this result, or are you even more confused than ever, how good and bad results come about?
'I don't know. To be honest, I have decided that one of my rewards to myself was not to analyse this theme any more. It's kind of tough. The last few months, especially in India, it seems like the only question I am answering. Are you finished? Are you retiring? What are your plans? I don't get angry with them, because I understand many of them are genuine fans who support me a lot, and this is the question that comes to mind for them and in a way I'm responsible. But there comes a point when you simply can't answer this question any more and you can't reflect. I don't want to reflect on what happened these last four years. And when you don't want to reflect you generally have to invent something, to say something just off the cuff, and I am fed up. In a way it's nice that this result comes with this added bonus, that I have one more event now to look forward to. So let's leave it there (laughs). It's clear to me that I've done something wrong and maybe I will figure it out or maybe I have already figured it out, but I don't want to keep on discussing it. That's all.'

'Everyone knows that Russian hotels are about the same temperature as India.'

The tournament is in Siberia, four Russians are taking part and an Indian is shining. How did you cope with the cold?
'Actually, it was no problem. Everyone knows that Russian hotels are about the same temperature as India. It's only cold outside. There was a bus that took us to the playing venue and brought us back. Besides it was literally a five-minute walk, so either way you wouldn't spend a long time in the cold. I even managed a few good walks. I had brought warm clothes. The only days that were problematic were when the snow was melting and you couldn't walk without your shoes getting wet.'

VLADIMIR BARSKY

Father Christmas couldn't have given Vishy Anand a bigger present than his sensational win in Sibera.

I always get the feeling that you feel comfortable in Russia.
'Yes, it is a very good country for me. I feel well there. But let's not exaggerate, it's also the country where I played the Tal Memorial (laughs). But you genuinely feel that people are very warm to you and this definitely helps you.'

The tournament went very well for you. I saw some similarity between the match in Bonn, where Kramnik ran into your opening sword twice and you got a great boost, and the first game here, where you immediately beat Aronian, one of the top favourites.
'Yes, very much so. In the same way that the tournament itself gave me a boost, the individual games that you mention had the same effect. A good result gives you wings. One lucky break and you feel very positive about the remaining games, and one result like this tournament and you feel very positive about life. This game was exactly the break I needed on so many levels. First of all, I would have taken any win, of course, but especially a win against Levon, with the white pieces. I mean, it's my first win against him ever with the white pieces (laughs). If you add all these things together, it's just a dream start. Besides, I don't want to say that Levon was my closest rival, because I think he was his own closest rival, but I understood as well that there would be tie-break implications and everything, and all the implications would be good. In addition, it was simply a very good game that gave me creative satisfaction. To beat the winner of Wijk aan Zee like this, you knew somehow that your tournament was going to be reasonable at least.'

Is that a typical modern phenomenon, that you can prepare whatever you want, but that you need some luck to be able to show it?
'I don't know if it's a modern phenomenon. It think it's perhaps always been this way, that you can prepare what you want, but you still need a break. It's nice to have ideas, but you still need one or two things in the tournament to go right and then things fall into place.'

Did you get to use ideas that you had prepared for the match against Carlsen? Ideas that you suddenly got the chance to play?
'No, it's not like I got to use a helluva lot of my preparation for Carlsen. Of course my preparation for Khanty itself was based on the work I had done for Carlsen, but at the level of an individual game you still have to take into account the fact that you're meeting a different opponent. But I had done the bulk of the work, which meant that I could have a very short training camp with Radek (Wojtaszek) right after Zurich and it was enough. I think that was the main benefit from it. We just worked for 10 days and that was it.'

Which may have given you the required freshness.
'I have no idea. I think when you win, you call it freshness, when you lose, you call it rustiness. I don't know. Like I said, these post-result explanations are like people explaining the previous day's stock market. It's very nice, but it doesn't really tell you very much.'

Despite this promising start you must have kept your doubts. How did you deal with that anguish that must have been at the back of your mind all the time?
'I simply stopped thinking about all that. After the match I don't think I reflected on what happened against Carlsen, or what happened in November or what was going on. I simply stopped thinking about all that. That was it, really. I had a brief period in London when I spoke to a few people and that was nice. You know, (Jonathan) Rowson, Kenneth Rogoff, and I guess you know by now about Vladi (as you can read in Vladimir Barsky's report in this issue, it was during a dinner in London that Kramnik more or less persuaded him to take part in the Candidates' – DJtG). But that is mainly a cathartic feeling. You just want to say it and get it out of your system. I was mainly happy to have a victim to listen to me. It's good to meet friends and have a nice dinner with them, that kind of thing.'

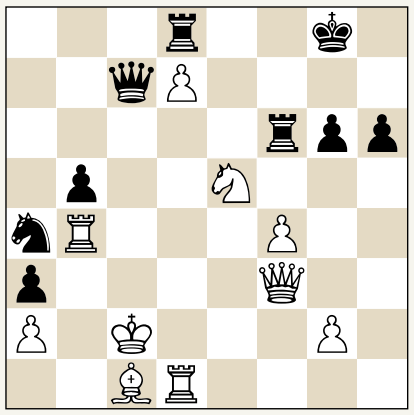
Were there any really scary moments in Khanty-Mansiysk?

'It's funny. There was this question after I drew against Kramnik in the second half, so Round 11. Then one journalist asked me a very convoluted question. Basically at that stage my mental map was: I am leading by one point over someone I have a better tie-break against, therefore I am leading by one and a half points and that was where I kind of placed it. And at this point this journalist said, you know, Sutovsky was thinking of scenarios of how you might not win this tournament. One of them is that people like Karjakin or Svidler would beat you, beat someone else and then win in the end. Some very convoluted argument. So, what do you think of these scenarios? I basically said that I tried not to think of such scenarios and that was it, which is correct. But then, in a way, I realized, though obviously he was trying to annoy me with this question, that it was not a bad thing that he said it. Because suddenly it hit me that my road ahead was not necessarily going to be smooth, since I would be facing two kamikaze pilots in the last two rounds. It was a useful shock. Essentially, in the last two games I was meeting two players who were desperate to win, because while the scenario of them sweeping everything was not unlikely, both of them understood that without beating me it didn't matter what they did to everyone else. But if they beat me, only then the same tie-break rule would work in their favour. That was a useful shock. And then, what can I say? I had a scary moment with Andreikin. I mean, even while I offered him the draw I understood this was the kind of moment that if you screwed up, this would be the game you would be going to remember all your life. And if you don't, there will be a lot of friends willing to help you out. After the draw with Andreikin I knew I really had to play this last game against Karjakin very well. But knowing that doesn't make it any easier.'

> 'I think when you win you call it freshness, when you lose you call it rustiness.'

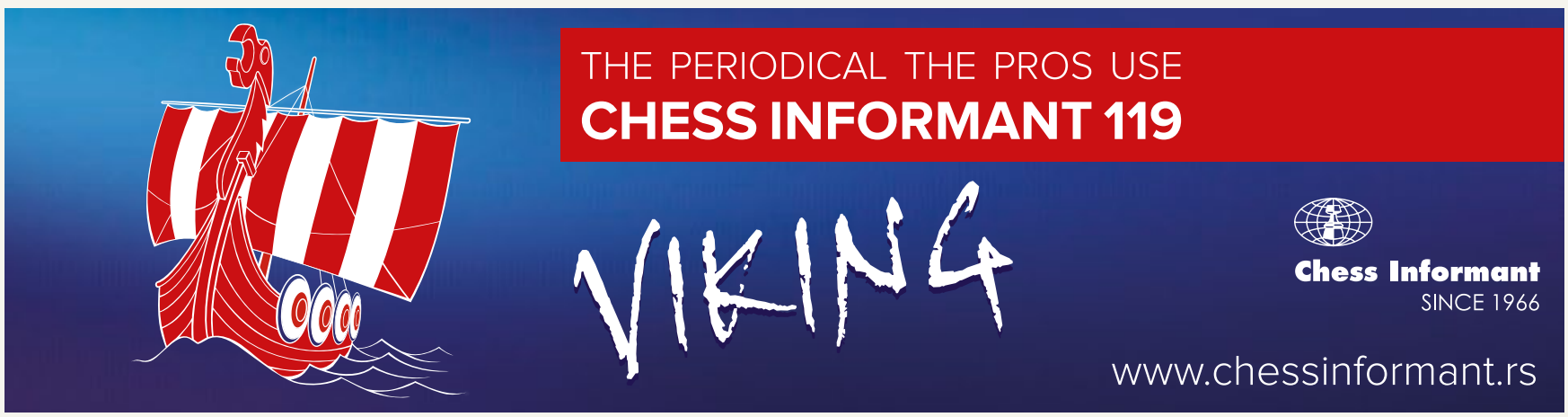
So although it briefly looked as if you were not in control against Andreikin, you were in fact very much in control when you took the draw.

'I know that I took the right decision. I think the opinion of people who are checking with engines shouldn't be compared to people who are sitting at the board. The point is that I knew that I'd blown something much easier, and remembered several possibilities, but here I was getting confused.



Anand-Andreikin
position after 40....♘a4+

I saw this line with Rook c4 and all that: 41.♖c4 bxc4 42.♕xa3 ♘c5 43.♖d5 ♘d3 44.♕e7 ♕b6. But what I simply failed to see was 45.♖b5. So I spent some time looking and I couldn't see Rook b5, and in fact the computer confirms that Rook b5 is the only move to win. So I was right. If you don't see Rook b5, you have no right to enter that line. And if you don't enter that line, the winning move must be King d2 (41.♔d2). But King d2, Queen d6 check, Knight d3, Rook takes d7 and in one move I have moved my knight from the e5-square to d3, and have lost the most important pawn that I have. And though I am a piece up, I must now sit and play with my king on d2 against a queen and two rooks on open files. Somehow my train of thought told me this wasn't anything like a one-way bet. This was actually quite scary. I calculated and I was getting tired and a mistake was as likely as a good move, and with some reluctance, because I understood that I was probably much better, I agreed a draw. It's not like I



was jumping for joy. You know that it's the wrong decision at one level and you have to trust yourself to take it. I thought I'd rather take this, get to the rest-day, sleep well, prepare for the remaining two games, because everything was still in my hands. And given the tournament situation it was. It's a practical decision. Of course, Fischer would have continued. Fine, so what? I took the decision that I was comfortable with and I still am. A loss would have been extremely painful at that point. Although I think it's fair to say if I had not won the tournament, I would have avoided this topic for a long time (starts to laugh).'

You were the only player with a stable tournament. Were you surprised by the erratic performances of the two top favourites, Aronian and Kramnik?
'Eh, yes, quite. I think we can also see this in the scores. In London there was plus 10 before the last round, so two plus 4s and two plus 1s. And in Khanty there was plus 3 before the last round. And I couldn't remember if there had been fewer wins. There were so many days in Khanty that we had three wins. Which then leads to the obvious conclusion that there was far more instability. There was no real gap between the others. Already at that stage many people matched my number of wins, but if I was still leading by such a margin, it was clear that I had been very stable indeed. Of course the others had good moments as well, but I didn't have any really weak moments and that made the difference.'

Let's go back to the months before Khanty-Mansiysk. When we met after the match in Chennai, you were not too eager to talk about your plans for the future. Understandable, of course. Yet you said that your plan was to play the Candidates' tournament. I obviously had serious doubts about this, but that's what you probably had to say. What were you really thinking?
'I was not thinking at all. After the match I think I disliked chess for a while. Basically, that is what I tried to say when I said that I would be thinking about the Candidates'. I first wanted to get back to some emotional equilibrium and then think. It was a big blunder to say this out aloud, of course. It would have been much simpler to say, Of course I will play the Candidates' and then if by January 20th I didn't want to sign, then I'd say I had changed my mind and that's it. But to live out this scenario for the next couple of weeks, answering this question about the Candidates' over and over, I realized I had just dropped myself into trouble. All I wanted was some peace and quiet to think, but in fact I conspired to make sure that I hardly got any (laughs). Luckily, between Christmas and the New Year everything just stopped, so I managed to get some rest. I didn't make a list of arguments for and against playing and compare them, I just wanted to have some time to be alone and to feel better about the decision. Do I feel like playing chess or do I not feel like playing chess? Basically, by the end of the year, by the 27th, 28th already, I woke up one morning and just thought, it's insane not to play. Once you think along those lines, you realize you really want to play.'

Is it also connected with the fact that you have not yet decided what your life should look like without chess? Without actively playing chess? Did that play a role?
'Perhaps, I don't know... Yeah, it could be, but I would say that I simply wanted to play chess rather than to turn up because I'd been invited. That's a better way of putting it. That I wasn't turning up out of some routine.'

Did the expectations in India or anything your wife said play a role ? Or was it just this waking up one morning?
'Obviously I spoke to Aruna a lot about this. We knocked it around a few times and we saw arguments for both sides. But somehow it was obvi-

Vishy Anand and the World Championship

With Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and the trophy in Moscow in 2012.

1990: Manila Interzonal: qualifies for Candidates' matches
1991: Candidates' matches Brussels: loses to Anatoly Karpov in quarter finals
1993: Qualifies for PCA Candidates' matches at Groningen Interzonal
1993: Qualifies for FIDE Candidates' matches at Biel Interzonal
1994: FIDE Candidates' Sanghi Nagar: loses to Gata Kamsky in quarter finals
1995: PCA Candidates' matches: wins final in Gran Canaria against Gata Kamsky
1995: PCA World Championship match New York: loses to Garry Kasparov (10½-7½)
1997: FIDE KO tournament Groningen: defeats Michael Adams in semi-final
1998: FIDE World Championship Lausanne: loses in final to Anatoly Karpov (5-3)
2000: FIDE KO World Championship New Delhi/Tehran: defeats Alexey Shirov in final
2002: FIDE KO World Championship Moscow: loses to Vasily Ivanchuk in semi-finals
2005: FIDE World Championship Tournament San Luis, 2nd after Veselin Topalov
2007: World Championship Tournament Mexico City: winner
2008: World Championship Match Bonn: defeats Vladimir Kramnik (6½-4½)
2010: World Championship Match Sofia: defeats Veselin Topalov (6½-5½)
2012: World Championship Match Moscow: defeats Boris Gelfand (8½-7½)
2013: World Championship Match Chennai: loses to Magnus Carlsen (6½-3½)
2014: Candidates tournament Khanty-Mansiysk: winner.
2014: World Championship Match against Magnus Carlsen: ?

ous to me that if I were somewhere else watching the others play the Candidates', I'd feel like killing myself. So that was it. It's another thing if I had to do something exceptional, but to turn down such a good tournament, a direct entry into it, what sense would that make? And in a way, hearing Vladi describe it in that way, "Why on earth would you not play?", maybe that also helped. But it took a while for everything to fall together.'

Now you're going to play Carlsen again and many people continue to believe that he is the clear favourite. How happy are you that you are getting a second chance to prove that you can fight him?
'The situation is more or less where it was a month ago, or two months ago. Except that I think a win like this changes your own perspective. A win like this suddenly gives me a lot of happiness, a lot of enthusiasm, positive emotions. If there was a list of problems to be solved, it would probably be as long as ever, except for one item, because top of the list has to be feeling good about your chess, or improving your morale. Under those terms I feel positive now and I am ready to give it another try and I am excited about it. But again, beyond that there is no sense in discussing my chances and what people think, it's just so boring.'

After you lost to Kasparov in 1995 that match remained an unpleasant memory, perhaps not even because of the result but because of all that happened away from the board. In the years that followed I felt that you would actually prefer not to play a match against him again. Why get yourself into a situation that you felt uncomfortable about? The loss against Carlsen was your harshest defeat ever, do you want to go back there?
'At the moment I am simply happy because of the result; I feel positive about chess again. You don't sit down to write down your thoughts, you either feel positive or you don't. I'm in a good place now to try, and I should be able to keep the feeling for a while. Grischuk made a very perceptive point. He said, Whoever wins the Candidates' will benefit from having won the Candidates', and I think this is exactly right.'

> 'There is no sense in discussing my chances and what people think, it's just so boring.'

You patched up your rating to 2785, Fischer's peak, but it's still close to a hundred points below Carlsen's. How realistic are these figures?
'I have no idea. Purely based on rating it was also unlikely that I would win the Candidates. It doesn't really matter. No one is denying Carlsen's strength and his rating, but anyway, what else is there to say really?'

Apart from the fact that Carlsen is a very strong player, there also seems to be a psychological side to it. The way you lost that blitz game against him in Zurich is pretty unique in your career. You don't lose blitz games like that. He has been described as a psychological player. Is that something you have to work on, this psychological side?
'Clearly I'll have to do things differently, but in Zurich I was still not in a good place. I mean, my performance in the rapid, what can you say? I don't lose many rapids either... I don't know, it doesn't matter. The point is, once you get into discussions like this, you're wasting a lot of energy and time and I am not interested.'

What impressed me when we talked in Chennai, and made me think that it wasn't so clear if you wanted to play the Candidates' or not, was that despite all the exertions you still looked in good shape, fresh and fit. Immediately after our talk you went to your fitness club to go for a swim. Has that feeling of fitness stimulated your hunger for more?
'I feel good about my fitness. Generally I have lost weight in the last year and I am feeling fine physically. As we can see, it's not the only thing, but at least I am happy on that front.'

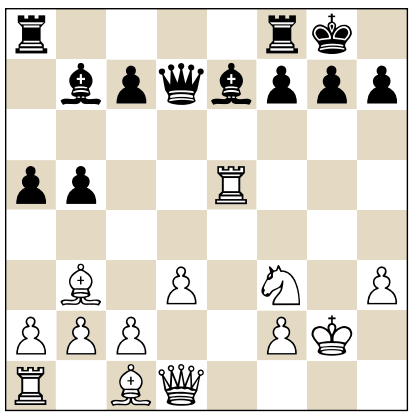
You're still happy about your weight?
'Yeah, sure, it's still floating in the new range. But also before this tournament I had a couple of quiet weeks at home with my son. These things help. But it's difficult to quantify.'

Talking about your son, after Kasparov lost the title to Kramnik, he once said that one of his reasons to get a rematch was that he wanted his son to see him play a match for the World Championship, and be aware of it. Do you have a similar wish?
'That's something that's on your mind, but I think he'd probably not understand it next year either. It's still too early to explain many things to him. The interesting thing about being with him is that I don't think about chess at all. It takes you so far away from chess. His concerns are so much simpler. He wants to lock me in a room and then close the door and when I finally open the door again he laughs. It's a different dialogue we have. (Laughs) To explain to him my motivation for this sounds absurd.'

Do you think that the fact that you're seeing and enjoying the importance of other things, that this has given you a different perspective on chess and that in a way it has helped you?
'I would assume so. Putting chess in its proper place is definitely very important. At least in the difficult moments it helps you to put things in perspective. And it's also nice sometimes to forget about chess. And he's the easiest way for me to do this.' ■

> continued from page 22

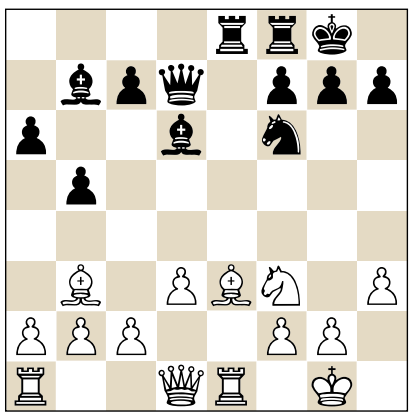
the e4-knight also demands some care, and after 15.♘c5 ♕c6! White loses material. Instead, White should just give the exchange on e7, but that wasn't really the plan) 14...♘xg2! 15.♔xg2 a5!!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Show this to Levon, and the rest he would have managed by himself. Now White has to show some great defensive skill to save himself from immediate disaster. Right now the threats are 16...a4 and 16...♖a6. 16.c3 must be his best bet, so the bishop can join the game from c2. 16...♖a6 17.d4 Also a good move. The bishop is ready to attack the rook on g6 from c2 and d4-d5 is in his plans as well. 17...♖g6+ (17...♖f6 can also lead to a cute line: 18.d5!? ♖g6+ 19.♗g5 ♗c8 20.♕h1! Magnus, with his passion for a queen on h1, could have pulled it off, but me, I am not sure ☺) 18.♔h2 ♖f6 19.♘e1!? (19.d5 is a way to give back material, but 19...♗d6 20.♔g2 ♖xf3 21.♕xf3 ♗xe5 22.a4 c6! is better for Black) 19...♖xf2+ 20.♔g1 ♖f6 and Black keeps the attack going, but White will keep on fighting, of course.

14.♖e1 ♖ae8 15.♘f3 ♗d6 16.♗e3



KIRILL MERKURIEV

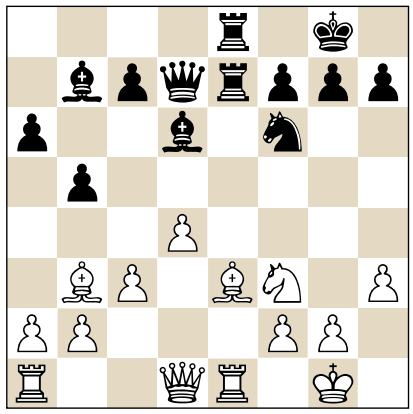
Let's work together. Newly-weds Victoria Cmilyte and Peter Heine Nielsen provided the English language commentary for ChessTV.

16...♖e7?! Levon took his time here, but in fact this is a little too slow. In general Levon is comfortable playing a pawn down, so he probably didn't see the need to hurry.

16...♘d5! would be more powerful, with the idea of taking on e3 at the appropriate moment.

17.d4 ♖fe8 18.c3

18.c4!? was more energetic.



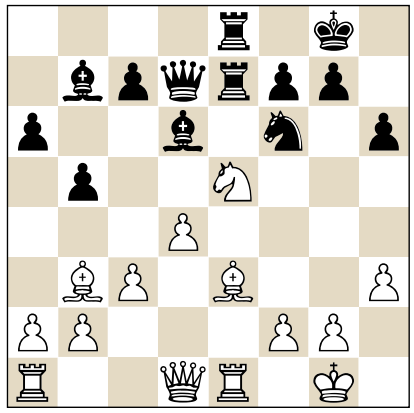
18...h6?

Again, 18...♘d5! should have been played, but Levon didn't see the threat.

18...♕f5 was suggested by the players, and that is obviously a decent move as well.

19.♘e5!

Now White achieves his dream in the Marshall: giving back the pawn and getting a slight risk-free advantage in return.



19...♗xe5 Levon hesitated, but there was no longer a way back.

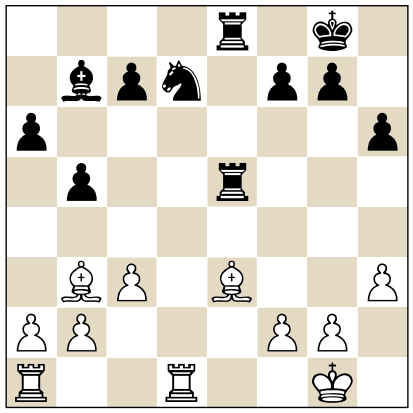
19...♕f5 20.♗c2 ♕c8 21.f4 is not acceptable for Black.

20.dxe5 ♖xe5

It is probably a matter of taste, but I think Black should have kept the queens on. But the question of what is the lesser evil was clearly not appealing to Levon.

After 20...♕c6 21.f3 ♖xe5 22.♕d2 White is doing very well, but Black has 22...♗c8, with the idea of transferring the bishop to e6 and trying to hold: 23.♗d4 ♖xe1+ 24.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 25.♕xe1 ♗e6 26.♗xe6 fxe6, with a worse but probably defensible position.

21.♕xd7 ♘xd7 22.♖ed1



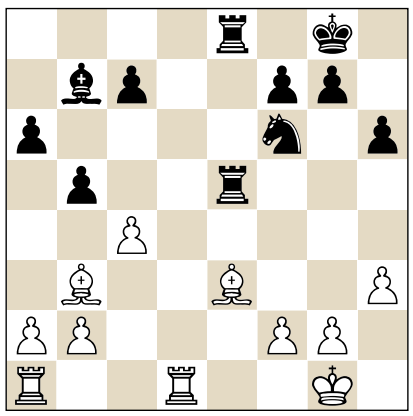
22...♘f6?

Played instantly. I believe Levon must have underestimated his problems, or, on the contrary, not liking what is going on, he simply got too impulsive. However, this was really the moment for a 40-minute think, which Black delayed for one move.

22...♘c5!? 23.♗xc5 ♖xc5 24.♖d7 ♖e2! has to be calculated quite deeply. The f7-pawn falls, but with his rook on the second rank, Black has some chances to survive.

22...♗c6 23.c4 ♘c5 was also better than the game continuation.

23.c4!



23...c6?!

The product of the above-mentioned 40-minute think. The situation is very bad already, but this doesn't help. Instead, his best bet would be to first get the bishop out with 23...♗e4! and only then take care of the pawn structure on the queenside. But then again, the position still remains incredibly bad.

24.♖ac1 ♖5e7 25.a4!

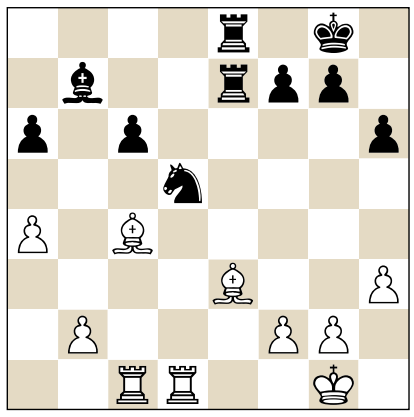
Putting some extra pressure on the queenside pawns.

25...bxc4

25...b4 is also bad, as the pawn is going to be lost there.

26.♗xc4 ♘d5

Levon has established some sort of a set-up on the queenside, but such passive ugly positions are rarely tenable.



27.♗c5 ♖e4

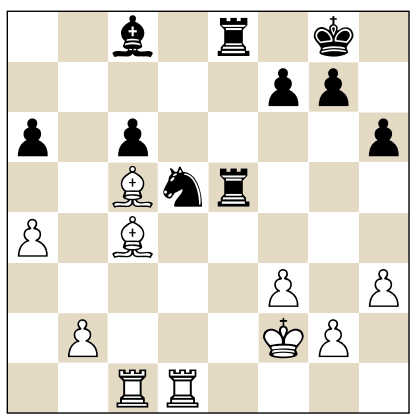
Maybe more tenacious was to keep the rook closer to the b7-bishop with

> 'In general Levon is comfortable playing a pawn down, so he probably didn't see the need to hurry.'

27...♖d7, but it would hardly have changed the evaluation of the position and the result of this game.

28.f3 Anand's play is very natural. He pulls his bishops back and activates his rook.

28...♖4e5 29.♔f2 ♗c8



30.♗f1!

In the style of Karpov. Sweet.

30...♖5e6 31.♖d3! ♘f4 32.♖b3! ♖d8 33.♗e3 ♘d5 34.♗d2!

Pulling back the second bishop. Now nothing can stop the invasion with either ♖b8 or, as in the game, ♖b6.

34...♘f6?!

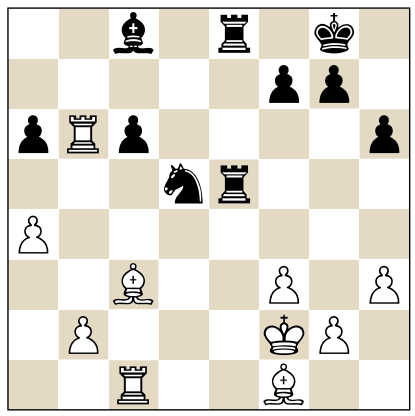
This loses immediately.

34...♗d7, followed by ...♖a8, would at least have kept the material balance, but not for too long, I believe.

35.♗a5 ♖de8 36.♖b6!

White wins a pawn.

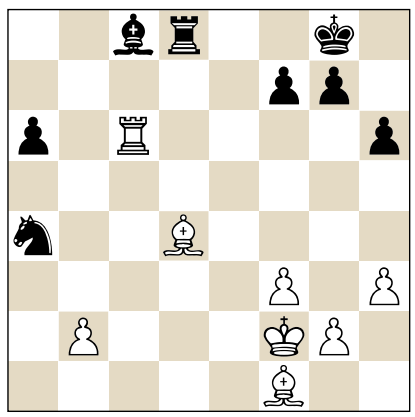
36...♖e5 37.♗c3 ♘d5



38.♗xe5!? Vishy decided to go for the idea of trapping the knight. Since it worked out fine, there is no need to criticize that, but as he pointed out himself, 38.♖xc6 would have been technically winning as well.

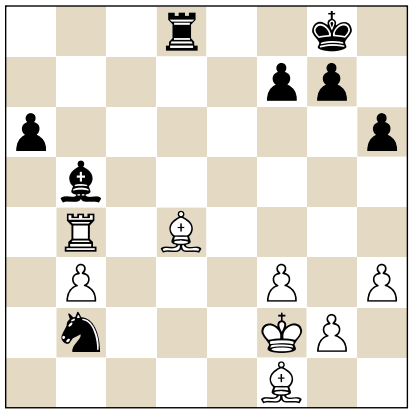
38...♘xb6 39.♗d4 ♘xa4 40.♖xc6 ♖d8

Levon barely made the time-control and came up with some tricks, but Anand calmly calculated everything.

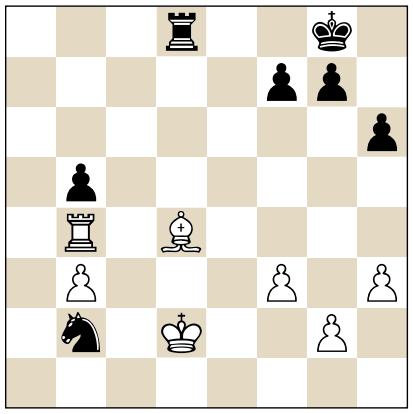


41.♖c4! ♗d7 42.b3 ♗b5 43.♖b4 ♘b2

A nice trick, but Anand was in control.



44.♗xb5 axb5 45.♔e3! ♖e8+
45...♘d1+ 46.♔e2!, and White wins a piece.
46.♔d2 ♖d8

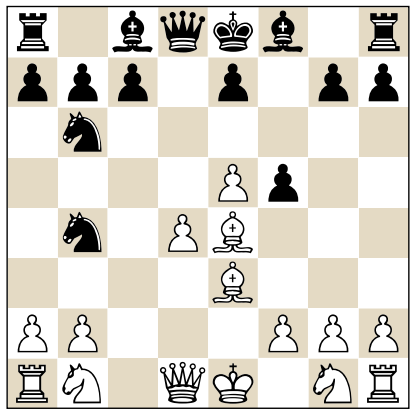


47.♔c3! Finally winning the knight. Black resigned. The mirroring lines 45... ♘d1+ 46.♔e2! and 47...♘d1+ 48.♔c2! are quite pretty.

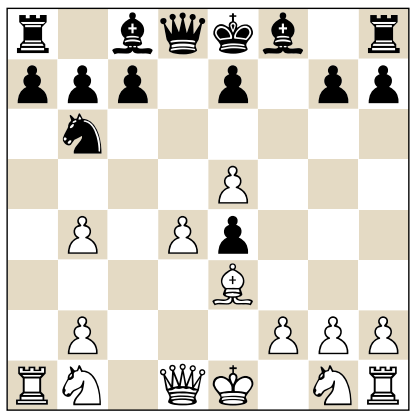
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

QG 3.11 – D20
Vladimir Kramnik
Sergey Karjakin
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (2)

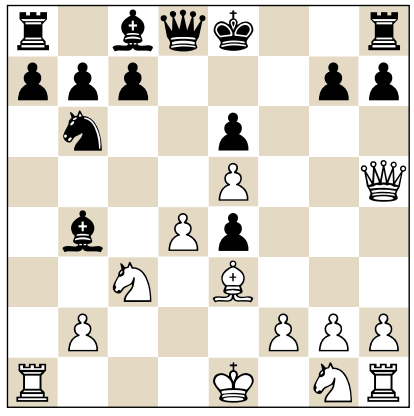
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4?! Sergey decided to surprise Kramnik, but as I have experienced myself, when you try doing that, you eventually end up surprising yourself. **3.e4 ♘f6** The most fashionable line of late.
4.e5 ♘d5 5.♗xc4 ♘b6 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♗e3 Before this game this particular line had been considered fine for Black. **7...♘b4 8.♗e4 f5** And now everyone automatically used to capture on f6, when after a long semi-forced sequence Black reached equality, as in the game Mamedyarov-Ponomariov, played two years ago in the Tashkent Grand Prix.



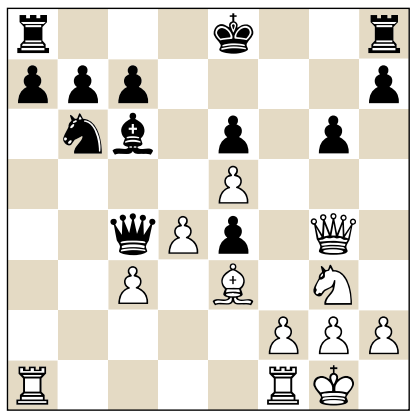
9.a3!? A peculiar novelty... except that it was played in an unnoticed game in Poland last year. In general, knowing how many important and unimportant games are being played these days, the meaning of a novelty or a new idea has gone beyond its original definition.
Here 9.exf6 exf6 10.♘c3 f5 11.♗b1 ♘4d5 12.♘f3 ♘xe3 13.fxe3 ♗d6 14.0-0 0-0 15.e4 c6 was played in, amongst others, the above-mentioned game by Ponomariov, a great expert in this line.
Alternatively, 9.♗f3 would have been perfect if not for 9...f4! 10.♗xf4 ♕xd4, and Black is taking over.
9...fxe4 Very dubious. Now Black's pawn structure is getting even worse. More solid is 9...♘4d5.
10.axb4



10...e6
10...♗f5? was an 'improvement' in the game Jakubowski-Azarov, played one week after this game in the Czech league. The moment the computer showed a stable evaluation of close to ± in this position, was the moment I started wondering what on earth the black player was... Well, who cares?
11.♘c3 ♗xb4 12.♕h5+!
Kramnik was still in his preparation, obviously. He's just making sure that Black's pawn structure is not just very bad, but very, very bad.



12...g6 13.♕g4
Here Sergey's situation was incredibly unpleasant. Kramnik is blitzing out his moves, the position is starting to look even worse than at first sight, so I am not going to criticize him.
13...♗xc3+!? 14.bxc3 ♕d5
Sergey decides to establish light-square domination in compensation for his disaster on the dark squares.
15.♘e2 ♗d7 16.0-0 ♕c4 17.♘g3 ♗c6 A critical moment. So far, Black has nicely developed his pieces on the light squares, but the problem with his king could turn out to be quite crucial.



18.♖a5?! I think Kramnik had simply forgotten about the idea of castling queenside. Or he had seriously underestimated it.
Once you realize that Black is consid-

> continued on page 34

Anish Giri assesses the eight Candidates

(in reverse order)

A great postscript or a whole new chapter?

8 Veselin Topalov: 6/14

The Bulgarian former World Champion was probably one of the most ambitious contenders in this Candidates' tournament and perhaps this ambition worked against him. Showing fresh opening ideas and a solid repertoire, he seemed well prepared, but his play was just way too uneven. The ups, which included his good wins versus Kramnik and Svidler, were high indeed, but the downs were way too low. Looking at his games with black against Svidler and Andreikin, the word suicide comes to mind. In general, he made many unnecessary mistakes and inexplicable blunders (a pleonasm?!☺). In the end, as it seems to me, his problem was that he just never found his form. His victory against Kramnik could have been a turning point, but his disastrous loss to Andreikin in the next round put paid to those hopes.

7 Peter Svidler: 6½/14

The seven-times Russian Champion is probably kicking himself as well. His excellent opening preparation was felt in many games and in general he seemed very confident and ready to go for full fights. But somehow, just like all participants except for one, he never got into his stride. He lost to Aronian in Round 4, clearly because he was too ambitious, scored a point against Topalov in Round 5, and then lost to Mamedyarov for pretty much no reason (although we also have to give credit to Shakhriyar). He never gained the required stability, until the very end, when he stabilized on -1 with three solid draws. A pity for the grandmaster from St. Petersburg, and from my personal perspective I can only say that I am looking forward to seeing more of him. If only for the simple reason that he picked up the Dutch Defence. ☺

6 Levon Aronian: 6½/14

The Armenian top-seed is definitely highly disappointed right now. As the pre-tournament favourite, he started off with a disastrous loss to Anand. Yet he fought his way back, winning some good games, and seemed to be in control of the tournament situation. However, playing Anand for the second time was another turning point in his event. In the final position, which was still full of fight, Levon decided to take no more risk and tried to outscore Anand. Right after that he met Mamedyarov, who played a brilliant game and seriously increased Levon's worries. After that game it only got worse. Maybe Levon no longer believed in his chances, or the opposite, put too much pressure on himself. Either way, his final score of –1 is a surprise, a shock and a disaster. He may face another crisis in his play, but nonetheless, as I am a great fan of Levon Aronian, I sincerely hope for him that he will remain a hippie, carefree and relaxed, and that he will be back to his usual self very soon.

5 Dmitry Andreikin: 7/14

The World Cup finalist never seemed too thrilled about his participation in the Candidates' and was perhaps much too realistic to really fight for first place. Yet he won't be disappointed with his result, which he would definitely have gone for before, during and after the event. Pragmatic at times, forcing

draws with White versus Kramnik and Karjakin, when his opponents were ready to fight, he didn't shy away either and even managed to gain victories against none others than Topalov and Aronian. Playing tenacious and sober chess, he remained calm throughout the event, managed to stay afloat and at the end even got to the 50% mark. He will be satisfied, and rightly so.

4 Shakhriyar Mamedyarov: 7/14

Azerbaijan's number one made a very, very good impression on me. His start was a disaster and briefly left me with the feeling that he had done nothing before the event and had come to gift points with both colours. But he managed to stay focused and started playing in a truly enterprising manner, showing his best chess. I don't know how Shakhriyar prepares for tournaments or for specific games, but there is definitely a lot that I and many other players can learn from him. His opening preparation seems naive and shallow, yet he manages to get the positions that fit his style and creates tricks out of nowhere. His games with white against Andreikin, Svidler and Karjakin showed his unique talent of creating a very dangerous initiative out of absolutely nothing. His game with black against Kramnik impressed me even more. Not only did he survive a dramatic opening, he also outplayed Big Vlad and, after the time-control, demonstrated a study-like win... until something inexplicable happened. At the press conference he showed the final details of the long line that he had seen and he merely confused himself two moves before victory. Even that didn't break Shakhriyar, who later beat Aronian in a brilliant game. His final result of a mere 50% should be blamed on his blackouts, the bad form in the first three games and the anti-miracle in his game against Kramnik. A pity for Shakh.

3 Vladimir Kramnik: 7/14

The legendary Russian ex-World Champion had high hopes for this tournament, and so did all of his fans. Convincing himself and all the chess world that all was going well, he didn't mind a slow start and got on a plus-1 score after six rounds. After his loss to Topalov his tournament became an up-and-down roller-coaster. He himself blames it on a lack of 'nervous energy', something different from physical form and more of an emotional state, as I understand it. Kramnik has an exceptional talent for knowing himself and assessing his form, which helps him prepare for important events and peak when it matters, but this time he didn't manage to. Speaking of his chess, his judgements were over-optimistic in most of his games, but then again, this only turns into a real problem in combination with bad form. He made way too many blunders to fight for first place, and his famous preparation unfortunately didn't show in most of his games. All in all, a bad result for Kramnik, a disappointment. If he wants to continue the trash talk with our hot-shot World Champion, he'd better get back in shape to score a big victory or two.

2 Sergey Karjakin: 7½/14

Sergey Karjakin will be very happy with his result. He was his usual self, a very tenacious defender and an excellent technician. In the first half he simply had bad luck. In Round 1 he was too nervous, playing slow and shaky chess. In Round 2 he got caught by Kramnik, who was waiting for him in a forgotten line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Then, playing his usual solid, straightforward chess he didn't get a real chance and met Levon on the wrong day, which I wouldn't wish on even my worst enemy.

And then there was the second half, when he suddenly won against Svidler and Kramnik, accepting gifts with his usual precision. Next, he was pressing against Topalov and even Anand. His last-round victory against Aronian, once again showing his skills of taking over cold-bloodedly, sent him onto +1, which meant 2nd place. Good as he was, I think it would be foolish to say that he really fought for first place. In this tournament there was only one contender, really.

1 Vishy Anand: 8½/14

The winner's result can be described as something in between these two statements: 'A very pleasant surprise' (V.Anand) and a 'Miracle' (various 'experts'). Indeed, if there is something like a 'comeback' then this is what a 'comeback' is. Anand simply got lucky in the first round. Aronian either didn't remember or didn't know his preparation (such things happen, when people work for you and not with you) and instead of a devastating attack (...♘f4xg2!), he got a terrible endgame (Anand's ♘e5!). That game deserves a separate examination, but once Anand got his chance, he grabbed it. With the rest of the field the old Anand had always been on a comfortable plus score and once he gained one more great victory, with black over Mamedyarov, we saw the old Anand again. Very, very pragmatic (the draw offer against Andreikin, 13…♕a5? against Karjakin), he nevertheless was in his best form and was never in any real danger. He was his old self, making no blunders, no oversights, his 'average move' being of high quality, something he was always known for. He defended well, he attacked well, everything was just going right for the old tiger.

The question is whether this was a great 'postscript' to his truly legendary career or a whole new chapter. That we will find out in the near future.

> continued from page 31

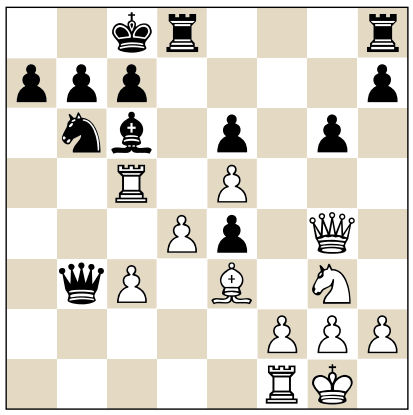
ering castling queenside and sacrificing the a7-pawn, 18.♕h4!? comes to mind: 18...0-0 19.♗h6, when 19...♖f7 allows a nice cheapo: 20.♖xa7! (say hi to the back rank – ♕d8+!) 20...♖e8, and now even the primitive 21.♘xe4 ♗xe4 22.♕xe4 ♘d5 will do. Although it looks like a nice blockade by Black, with all white pieces joining in, beginning with 23.♖fa1, followed by a well-timed h4-h5, White should break through.

18...0-0-0!

Black's position is still very unpleasant, but now that his king is in safety, things become a lot less clear.

19.♖c5 19.♖xa7 is met by 19...♘a4!, with the threat of 20...♔b8: 20.♖a8+ ♔d7 21.♖xd8+ ♖xd8, and since the c3-pawn is falling, the position is double-edged.

19...♕b3

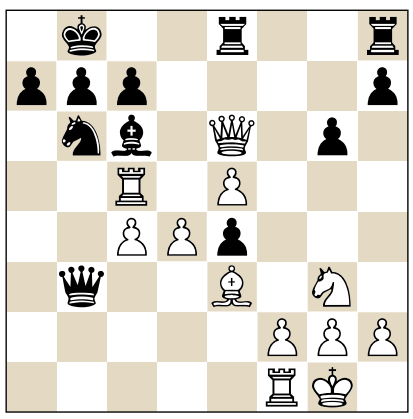


20.c4 Tempting. 20.♖xc6! is quite thematic and was good right here: 20...bxc6 21.♘xe4, with easy play and a large advantage.

20...♔b8!?

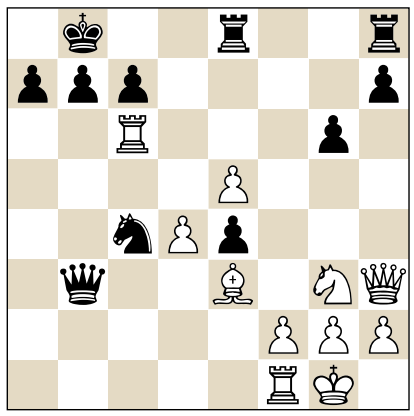
Sacrificing the e6-pawn for the one on c4, and maintaining control of the d5-square.

21.♕xe6 ♖de8



22.♕h3? Perhaps Kramnik had missed Black's defence on move 23 here, as otherwise he might have seriously considered a more sophisticated way to withdraw his queen: 22.♕f7! ♖ef8 23.♕e7! (23.♕g7? ♘xc4!) 23...♖e8 (23...♘xc4? 24.♕e6!) 24.♕g7! ♖eg8 25.♕h6! ♘xc4 26.♖xc6, with the same idea as in the game, but keeping the e3-pawn protected: 26...♘xe3 27.fxe3! bxc6 28.♘xe4, with a serious advantage.

22...♘xc4 23.♖xc6



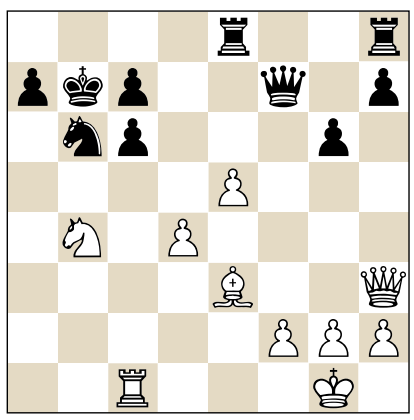
23...bxc6? After putting up serious resistance, Karjakin overlooks his chance. 23...♘xe3! 24.♘xe4, and here is the point: 24...♕d5!. Now White can either give up an exchange or choose to retain the material balance, but either way, the advantage is no longer there.

24.♘xe4 Now the situation stabilizes. Black has a very unpleasant position and being in time-trouble, Karjakin was pretty much doomed.

24...♘b6 25.♘c5 ♕d5 26.♖c1

Simple chess works here.

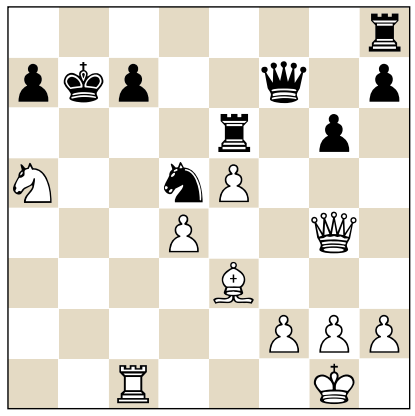
26...♔a8 27.♘a6 ♔b7 28.♘b4 ♕f7



29.♕g4

Not the most exact, but then again, we are merely humans.

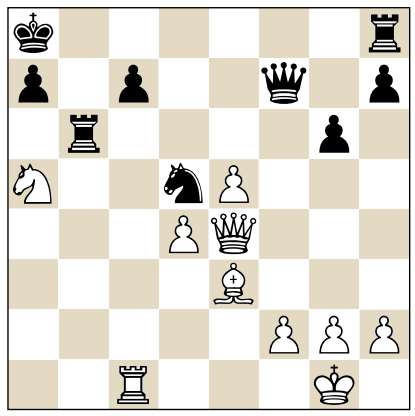
29...♘d5! 30.♘xc6 ♖e6! 31.♘a5+



31...♔a8

31...♔b8 was a little different, but it's hard to say where the king stands better. And anyway, in time-trouble you don't bother about such nuances.

32.♕e4 ♖b6



33.g4!?

This looks nice, but the machine frowns a little. The idea is obviously to take away the key f5-square.

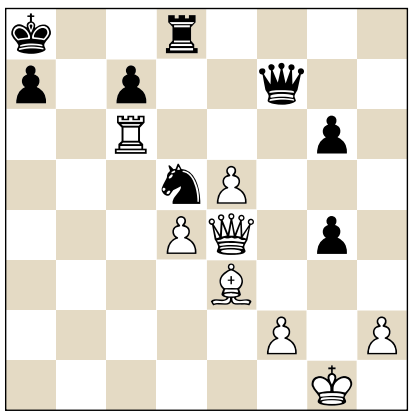
After 33.g3?! Kramnik might have disliked 33...♖b5, with the idea of 34.e6? ♕f5!, and rightly so.

33.♖c5 was more precise, apparently. The idea is to choose the appropriate 'luft' a little later, when it becomes clear what defence Black is going to choose. After 33...♖d8 34.♘c6 ♖e8 there is no need for 35.g4, and after the modest 35.g3 White is winning.

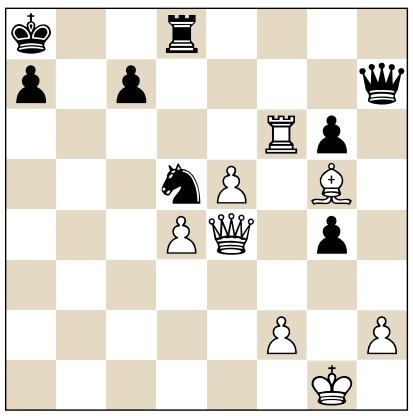
33...h5?

33...♖d8! 34.♘c6 ♖e8 35.♖c5 ♕e6! would have kept the game alive, but it is clear who is in trouble. After, for example, 36.♘xa7! there is 36...♖d8! 37.♘b5 ♔b8!, and White still has to break Black's resistance.

34.♖c5 Now it is gone. **34...♖d8 35.♘c6 ♖xc6 36.♖xc6 hxg4** With equal material anything wins. Black is pinned and the e-pawn's road is clear.



37.♖f6 ♕h7 38.♗g5

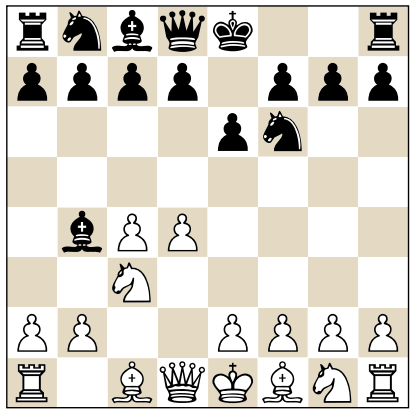


38...♕g8
One more mistake, but the position was dead lost anyway.
39.♖xg6 Black resigned.
An impressive victory by the old guard. There is no better way to praise the game than by quoting Karjakin: 'I fought, I lost and I don't blame myself for anything in this game.'

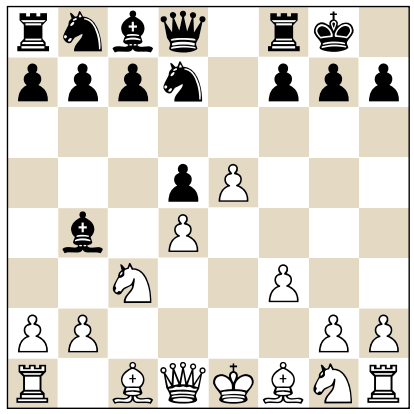
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

NI 30.2 – E20
Sergey Mamedyarov
Levon Aronian
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (9)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3
The never-dying popularity of the Nimzo-Indian doesn't surprise me. Although White allows his knight to be pinned, the prospect of avoiding 1.The Queen's Gambit 2.The Vienna 3.The Ragozin 4.The Semi-Slav, and 5.The Queen's Indian, is just too seducing for all of us, lazy professionals.
3...♗b4



4.f3 There is hardly a sharper line in the Nimzo than this one starting with this peculiar pawn move. The point is quite obvious, the key e4-square is taken under control.
When Shakh is in a quiet mood, he goes for 4.♕c2 here.
4...0-0
This is relatively rare. I am much more familiar with the main move 4...d5 and the sharper 4...c5, which Karjakin played against Shakhriyar later in this tournament.
5.e4 d5
The centre has to be challenged.
6.e5 ♘fd7 7.cxd5 exd5
In this structure the plans are quite clear. White has to finish his development before it is too late and Black has to try and open up the position with the standard breaks – ...c5 and ...f6.

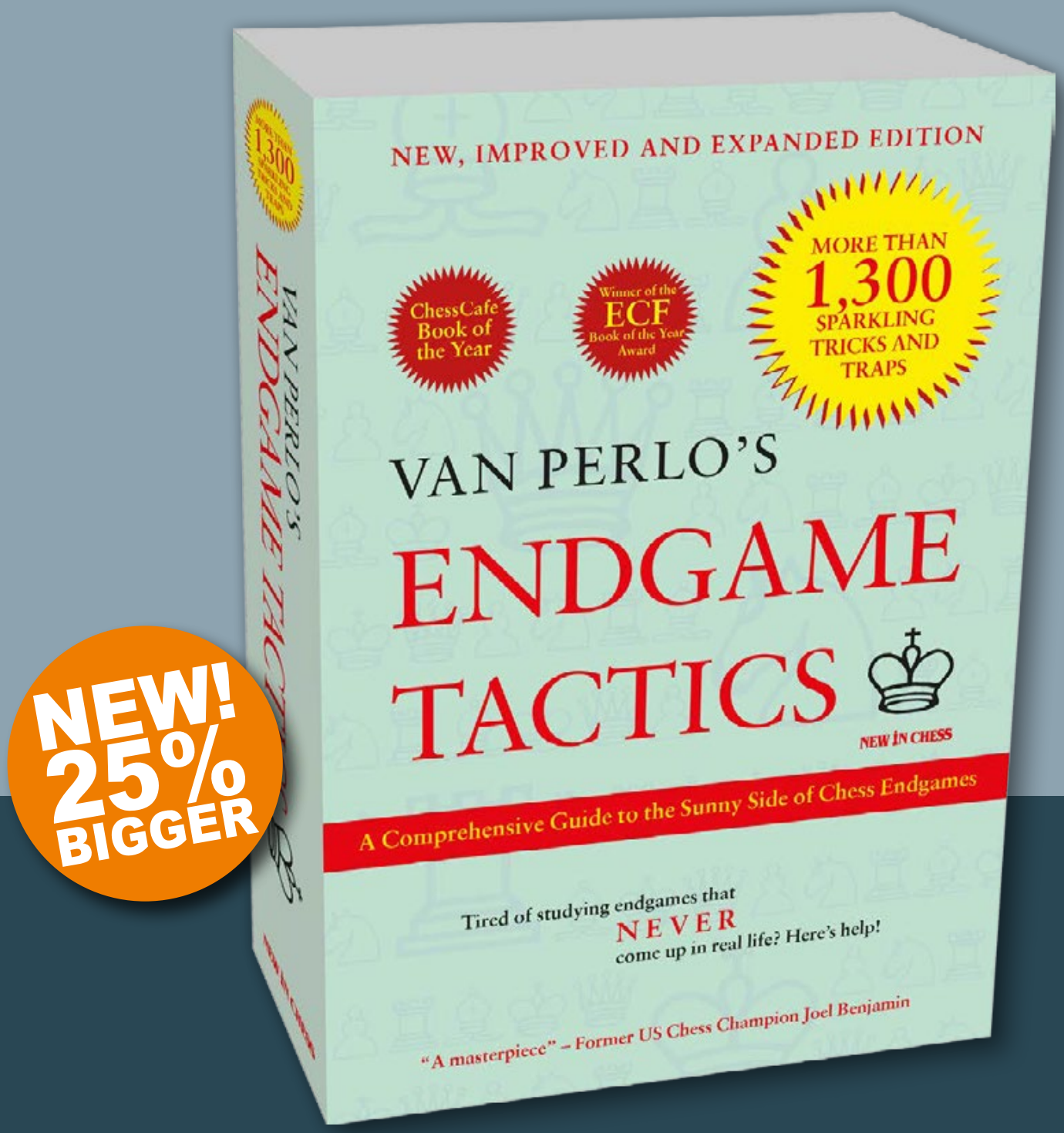


8.a3
8.f4, with the idea ♘f3, is also very logical and common, when Black should continue with 8...c5.
8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 f6
Since White's pawn has just landed on c3, 9...c5 would be a little too slow. Instead, Black acts fast. With the white pieces all on the back rank and a weird pawn on f3, Black should have some trumps once the position opens up a little.
10.exf6

VLADIMIR BARSKY

In Round 2 Vladimir Kramnik seemed to confirm his role as one of the top favourites, with an impressive win. As Sergey Karjakin put it: 'I fought, I lost and I don't blame myself for anything in this game.'

Forget about theoretical endgames. Just enjoy the entertainment!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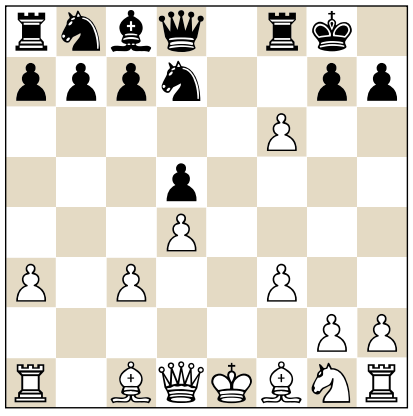


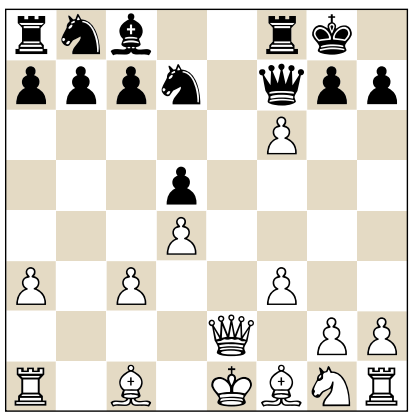
10...♕e8+!? 10...♕xf6 is a down-to-earth move, when White will manage to develop his pieces and in the future might use the kingside majority and potentially the e5-square.

11.♕e2

11.♔f2 is also in the style of the line. Here, though, I doubt whether Black will be left unhappy about his prospects, as after 11...♘xf6 the knight is ready to jump towards the e4-g4-squares with a nasty check.

11...♕f7!?

A powerful novelty, in the style of Levon. Black is giving up a pawn, but keeps the momentum.



12.fxg7

You gotta do what you gotta do.

12...♖e8 13.♗e3 ♘c6

Now the knights are aiming for the c4-square, and there doesn't seem to be much White can do about it. But Shakhriyar finds his own way.

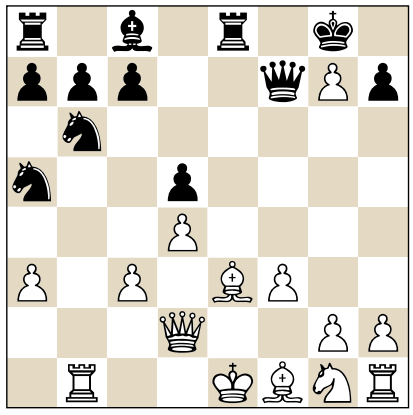
14.♕d2 ♘a5 15.♖b1!!

Sometimes even in such sharp and random positions, or rather, especially in such sharp and random positions, a strong grandmaster with imaginative talent can come up with an idea better than a Houdini running on many hot cores.

KIRILL MERKURIEV

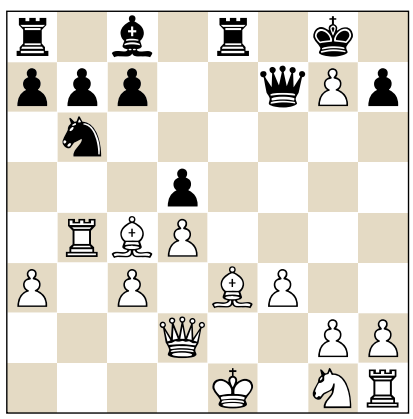
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov fought back admirably after a poor start. The Azeri's opening preparation seems naive and shallow, yet he manages to get the positions that fit his style and creates tricks out of nowhere.

15...♘b6



16.♖b4!! Since I noticed that the fans of the Armenian wizard Levon Aronian are too sensitive when it comes to bad jokes about his superb opening preparation, I will merely suggest that he might have missed this bold idea of sacrificing the exchange.

16...♘ac4 17.♗xc4



17...dxc4?!

I know Levon too well to criticize this and his next move. It is against his philosophy to go along with his opponent's plans.

17...♘xc4 18.♖xc4 dxc4 19.♘e2 ♗f5 20.♔f2 leads to the exact same position as in the game, but the black queen is on f7 and not on d5. In fact, it wins him a full tempo, as ♘f4, which is anyway the right direction for the knight, doesn't hit the queen here.

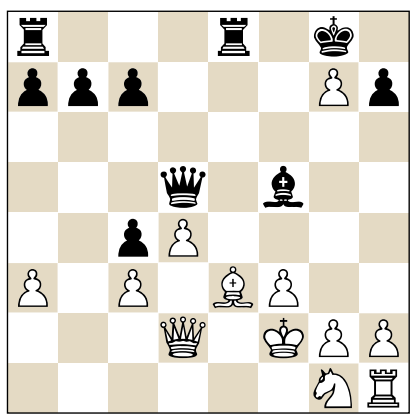
18.♖b5 ♗f5?!

Levon is trying to fight for the initiative, but there is simply no way to throw more oil into the fire.

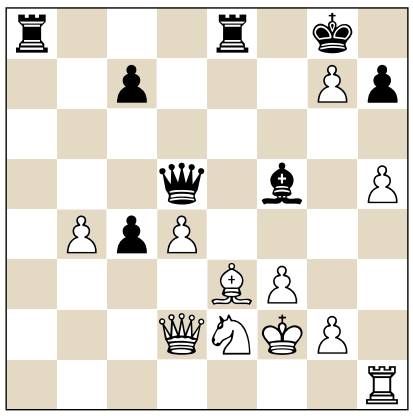
19.♔f2

19.♖e5! is strong as well, but since Black hasn't taken the exchange for two moves, why prevent it now?

19...♘d5 20.♖xd5 ♕xd5



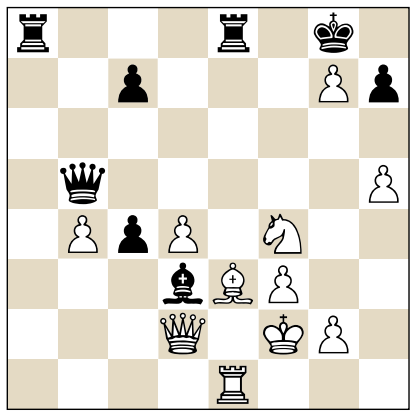
21.♘e2 a5?! Black goes for the plan with ...a5, ...b5, ...b4, which suggests itself, but could be a little too slow.
Instead, maybe he should have tried something like 21...♖ad8!?, activating the second rook, followed by ...♖d7, and then, depending on what White advances, either ...♖de7 or perhaps ...♖xg7.
21...♖e7?!, with the idea of doubling at once, seems logical, but after 22.♗g5! there is no good square for the rook: 22...♖xg7? 23.♗f6!, followed by 24.♕g5, while if 23...♖g6 then 24.♘f4.
22.h4
One of the ways to push the pawns. Another way was to start with 22.♘f4 and 23.g4, but I like the way Shakhriyar does it, keeping more flexibility.
22...b5 23.h5 b4 24.cxb4 axb4 25.axb4 Black has opened the a-file, but now he goes astray.



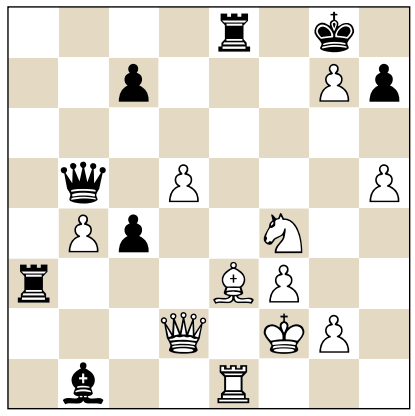
25...♕b5?? This one is a real mistake, and an inexplicable one to boot. Black can't afford a slow move like this. Of course, Levon understands such simple things and had some reasoning for his decisions, but then again, I am just a naive, young commentator, so I haven't a clue what that reasoning might have been.
25...♗d3! should have been played right away, without wasting an important tempo.
26.♘c3 might have been the reason why Levon went 25... ♕b5 first, but here, after 26...♕d6 27.b5 ♔xg7!, Black has a strong bishop on d3 and will hide his king on either h7 or f7, with decent chances of survival: 28.d5 h6!? 29.♗d4+ ♔h7.
26.♘f4 ♕d6, followed by ...♖a3, gives Black some counterplay. Basically the same as in the game, but with a tempo more: 27.♘xd3 (27.h6!? ♖a3 28.d5 ♖ea8 29.♔g3 ♖a2 30.♕c3 ♖e8 is a crazy house, when Black seems to be having some serious counter-threats) 27...cxd3 28.♕xd3. This doesn't look that scary to me, if I were Black, but after 28...♖a2+ 29.♗d2 ♕xb4 30.♖d1 White is indeed the one who is pressing.

> 'As an experienced partner of Houdini I quickly realized that the low evaluation of White's advantage is caused by the over-appreciation of the c3-pawn and the limited horizon of the engine.'

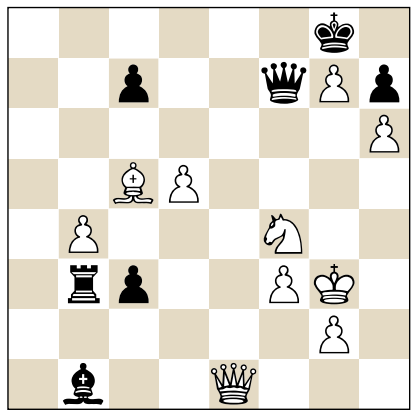
26.♖e1
Not the only idea, but a good one. The rook will stand very well here in the near future, even though some pieces stand in its way for the moment.
26...♗d3 27.♘f4



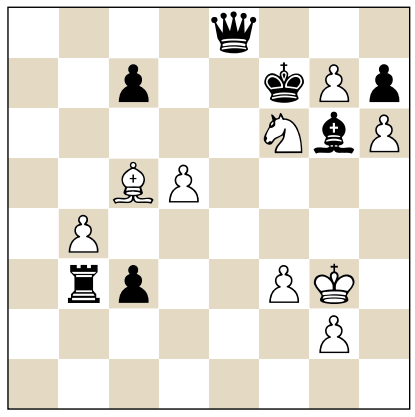
27...♖a3?! The position already looks quite hopeless, but this, once again, is too slow.
27...♖a4! creates a simple threat, but after 28.d5 ♕xb4 29.♕xb4 ♖xb4 30.h6 Black's position is quite sad. White's pawns on g7 and h6 are going to prove decisive in an endgame like this.
28.d5 ♗b1 A nice try, but in fact Black is way too uncoordinated to organize real counterplay.



29.♔g3 The sexiest win. **29...c3 30.♕c1 ♖b3 31.♗c5** Again, 'one of the'. **31...♖xe1 32.♕xe1 ♕d7 33.h6 ♕f7**



34.♘h5
There are many ways to mate the black king, for example 34.♕e5 followed by 35.d6, but Shakhriyar forces a winning endgame instead.
34...♗g6 35.♕e8+! ♕xe8 36.♘f6+ ♔f7

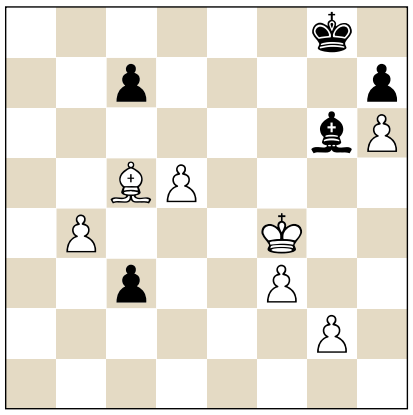


KIRILL MERKURIEV

With a whopping 5 out of 7 Sergey Karjakin was the hero of the second half. Watched by FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov the 24-year-old Russian thinks about his opening in his last game against Levon Aronian.

37.♘xe8 The knight is intending to come back to f6, so the only move is: **37...♖a3 38.♘f6 ♖a8** and after **39.g8♕+ ♖xg8 40.♘xg8 ♔xg8 41.♔f4** White has just too many pawns. His plan is simple: ♗e3, push the pawns g4-g5, f4 followed by ♔e5, d6, and eventually the b-pawn will queen.

For a moment the people watching the live transmission got somewhat confused, but as an experienced partner of Houdini I quickly realized that the low evaluation of White's advantage is caused by the over-appreciation of the c3-pawn and the limited horizon of the engine.



41...♗d3 42.♔e5 ♔f7 43.♗e3 ♗f1 44.g4 Black resigned.

A superb game by Shakhriyar.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

SI 44.4 – B23
Levon Aronian
Sergey Karjakin
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (14)

I remember an interview with Levon Aronian in which he was asked why he doesn't he play 1. e4. That time he answered that it is because he wants to keep it for when he is a pensioner.

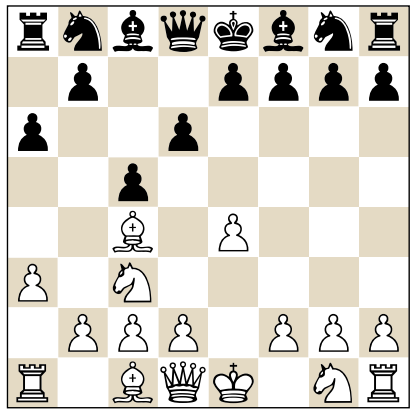
1.e4 I hope this doesn't mean that Levon has decided to retire.

1...c5 Sergey doesn't want to know what Levon had in mind against his pet Berlin Wall.

2.♘c3 Having no experience in the Sicilian, Levon uses his experience in the English Defence. (Having said that, Levon played 1.e4 and Open Sicilians in his early days, of course.)

2...d6 3.♗c4 a6 4.a3

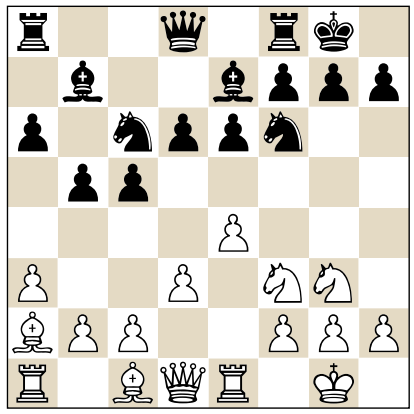
What Levon is doing may seem quite odd, but in fact he is taking a pragmatic approach. He is just telling himself that this is an English Opening in which he plays Black and enjoys an extra tempo. Indeed, the plan with ...e5, ...♘c6, ...♗c5-♗a7 is quite common versus 1.c4.



4...e6 5.d3 ♘f6 6.♗a2 ♘c6 7.♘f3

Throwing out the f-pawn first is another way of handling this peculiar position.

7...♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖e1 b5 10.♘e2 ♗b7 11.♘g3



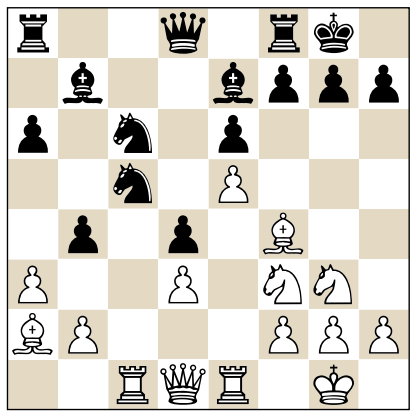
11...d5

Drastically changing the structure. 11...a5, with the idea of ...b4, would probably be met by 12.c3 b4 13.d4, with an unclear position.

12.e5 ♘d7 13.c3 d4 Not allowing White to consolidate his pawn chain.

14.cxd4 cxd4 15.♗f4 ♘c5 16.♖c1 b4

Since White potentially has some prospects on the kingside, Black needs to create play of his own.



17.♗g5?

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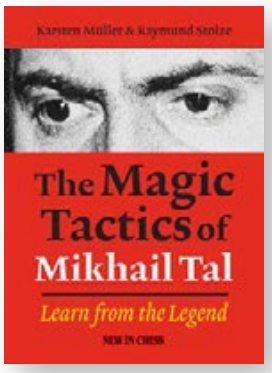

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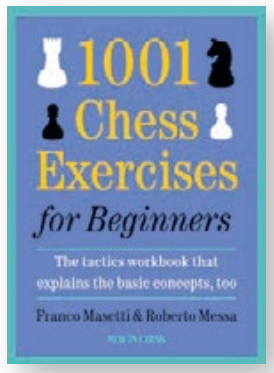
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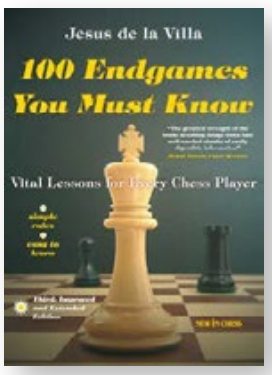

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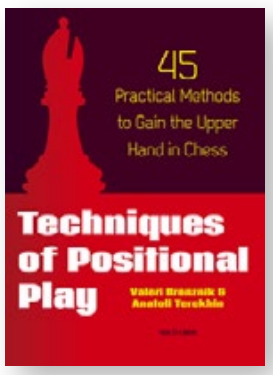

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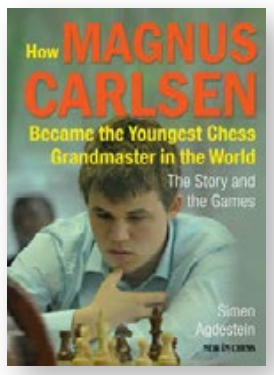
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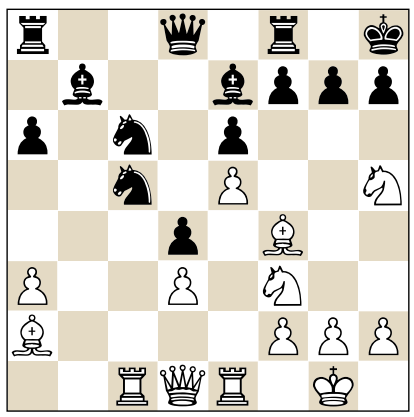
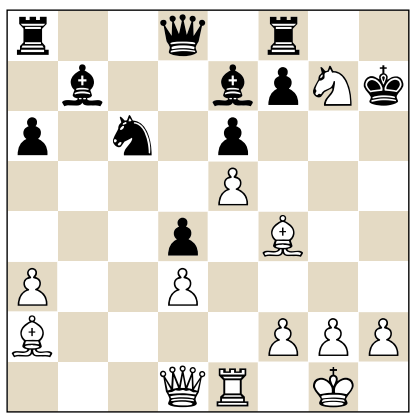
I don't like this move at all. It seems to me that White has excellent attacking potential and that it is wrong to exchange pieces like this.
17.♘h5! seemed very attractive to me. I don't know what Aronian disliked here, but White has the pretty idea of giving up the exchange and starting a direct assault. For example: 17...bxa3 (17...b3?! 18.♗xb3 ♘xb3 19.♕xb3 ♘a5 20.♕d1 is just a pawn here) 18. bxa3 ♔h8.



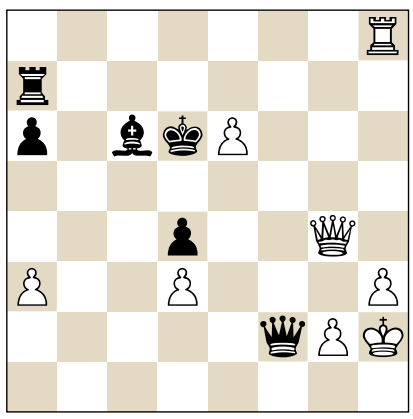
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Maybe not the best, but it's hard to suggest a clear defence here. 19.♖xc5! ♗xc5 20.♘g5 (something bad is going to happen) 20...♗e7 21.♘xh7! ♔xh7 22.♘xg7!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Have you ever seen the double bishop sacrifice on h7 and g7? Yes you have, but how about the double knight sac? 22...♖h8!. The only defence (22...♔xg7 23.♕g4+ ♔h8 24.♕h5+ ♔g8 25.♗h6! is pretty trivial), but now comes 23.♘xe6! fxe6 24.♕h5+ ♔g7 25.♕g4+ ♔f8 26.♗xe6! ♕a5!. Black also has some resources. The king gets some space to escape and the e1-rook gets hit: 27.♖b1! ♔e8!



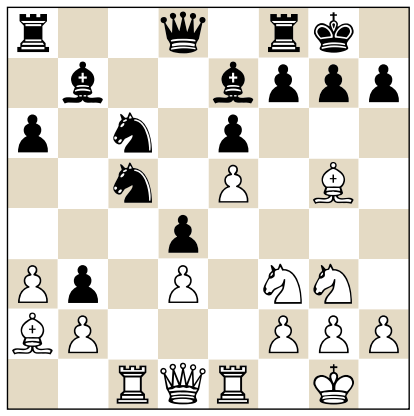
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

(prophylaxis, part 1) 28.h3! (prophylaxis, part 2) 28...♖a7! 29.♗d7+ ♔d8 30.♗xc6 ♗xc6 31.♖b8+ ♔c7 32.e6+! ♗d6 33.♖xh8 ♕e1+! (Black keeps fighting!) 34.♔h2 ♕xf2 35.♗xd6+ ♔xd6

36.♕g5!!, and after this accurate move, which crowns a truly incredible attack, Black is forced to give up his extra piece for the queen swap on g2 and White should win the ensuing rook ending. To calculate this line is, of course, impossible, but the first couple of moves were asking to be played and it's a great pity that Levon didn't go for 17.♘h5!.

17...b3!? A clever shot.

Black could liquidate by force here: 17...♗xg5 18.♘xg5 ♕xg5 19.♖xc5 ♕e7 20.♘e4 bxa3 21.bxa3 and now since the knight goes to d6, White's perspectives seem very good until you see 21...♘a7! 22.♘d6 ♘b5!, exchanging the powerful knight and obtaining an excellent position.



18.♗b1

Levon is hoping that he will get the bishop back into the game after the b3-pawn falls.

18.♗xb3 was more conventional: 18...♘xb3 19.♕xb3 ♘a5!? (19...♗xg5 20.♘xg5 ♕xg5 21.♕xb7 ♘xe5 22.♕e4 ♘g6 23.♕xd4 ♖fd8 is roughly equal, as Black will regain the pawn quite soon) 20.♕a4

KIRILL MERKURIEV

At one of the press conferences Dmitry Andreikin expressed surprise at the fact that chess was taught in Khanty-Mansiysk but there were no children in the hall. His call for spectators was honoured and a group of school kids appeared for Round 12.

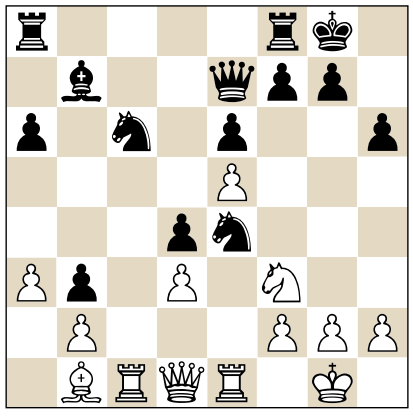
♗xg5 21.♘xg5 ♗c6 22.♖xc6 ♘xc6. This wins an exchange, but White has enough pawns: 23.♘xe6 fxe6 24.♕xc6, with a balanced position.

18...h6?

Sergey probably blundered White's 20th and 21st move.

18...♗xg5! was the way, when after 19.♘xg5 ♘d7 20.♘f3 ♖b8! 21.♕xb3 ♘a5 22.♕d1 ♗xf3 23.♕xf3 ♖xb2 24.♗c2 ♘b3 25.♗xb3 ♖xb3 Black is the one pressing.

19.♗xe7 ♕xe7 20.♘e4 ♘xe4

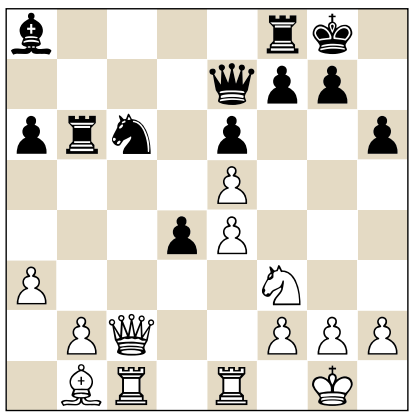


21.dxe4! The key. Now the bishop gets the d3-square and the b3-pawn falls. **21...♖ab8!** After his blunder, Sergey starts playing simple and strong moves.

22.♕xb3?! 22.♗d3! was much cleverer, but the players were too tired for such subtleties.

22...♗a8 23.♕c2 White's coordination is a little awkward now.

23...♖b6!



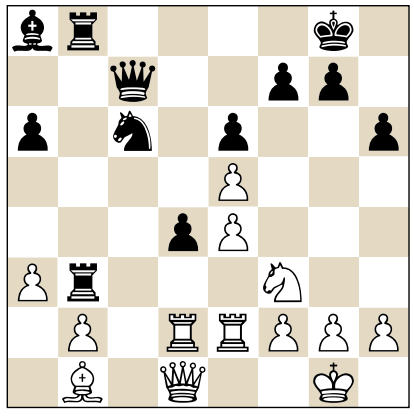
24.♖cd1 Too ambitious.

The logical outcome here would have been 24.♕d2 ♖fb8 25.b4 a5 26.♘xd4 ♘xd4 27.♕xd4 axb4 28.axb4 ♖xb4, with a draw.

24...♖fb8 25.♖e2 ♕b7

The engine likes 25...♖xb2!? 26.♕xb2 ♖xb2 27.♖xb2 ♕xa3, but for a human it is hard to decide on such an exchange, especially when it is not needed.

26.♖dd2 ♖b3! 27.♕d1 ♕c7



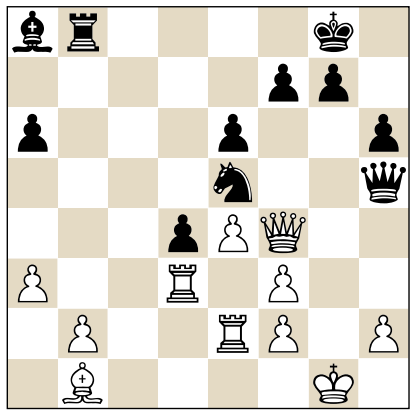
28.♕c1? Missing Black's idea.

28...♖xf3! 29.gxf3 ♕xe5

Suddenly Black gets some serious compensation for the exchange.

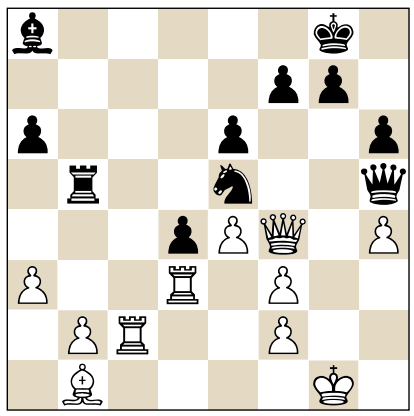
30.♖d3 ♕h5 31.♕f4 ♘e5

31...♖b5!? was stronger, as then after 32.h4 ♘e5 the rook is no longer in the pin.



32.♖c2?! 32.♖xd4 ♘xf3+ 33.♔g2 ♘xd4 34.♕xb8+ ♔h7 35.♖e3 ♘f5! leads to a black advantage. 32.♔g2! was somewhat more consolidating.

32...♖b5! 33.h4

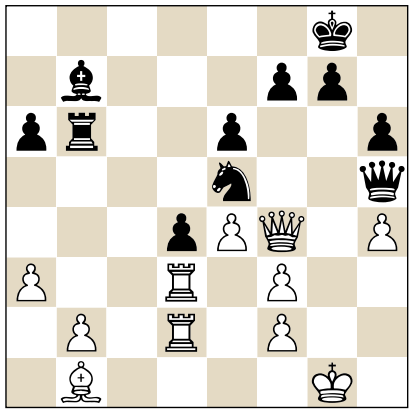


33.♖c8+ ♔h7 34.♖xa8 ♘g6! 35.♕g3 ♖g5 would be a disaster for White. His rooks are uncoordinated and Black's knight will decide.

33...♗b7?!

33...♗c6! was winning, the idea being that after 34.♖cd2 ♖c5! 35.♖d1 ♗b5 the black bishop is much better placed on c6, where it is able to jump to either b5 or a4.

34.♖cd2 ♖b6



35.♔f1?

Better was 35.♔g2 or 35.♕g3. Now the king appears on the wrong diagonal.

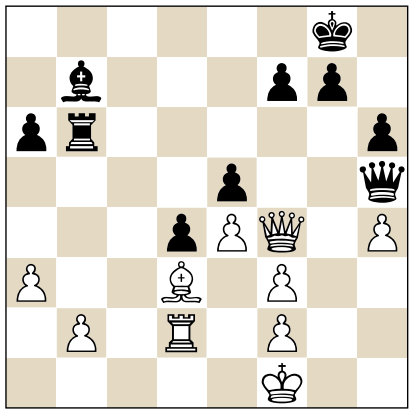
35...♘xd3?

35...a5! would have won, once again getting the bishop into play: 36.♖xd4 ♗a6+ 37.♔g2 ♖b3!, and suddenly White is lost.

36.♗xd3

Now White is merely slightly worse.

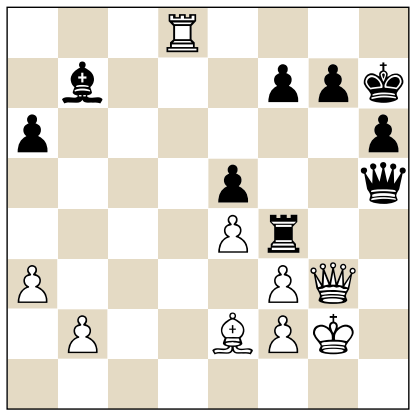
36...e5



37.♕g3?! 37.♕g4 would exchange queens and it's incredible that Levon didn't go for it: 37...♕xg4 38.fxg4. Black is better, but White has decent saving chances.

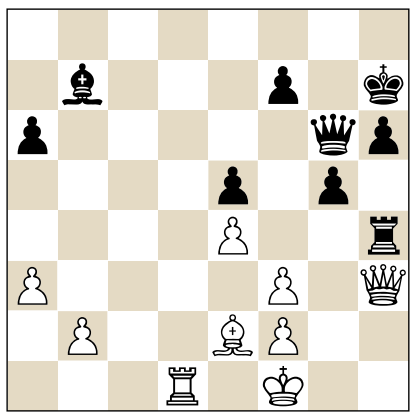
37...♖f6 37...♖g6! was more precise: 38.♕h3 ♖f6.

38.♗e2 ♖f4 39.♖xd4! ♖xh4 40.♖d8+ ♔h7 41.♔g2 ♖f4

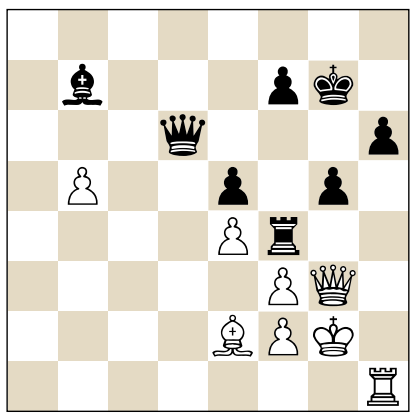


42.♖d1! With the idea of 43.♖h1. White is still in the game.

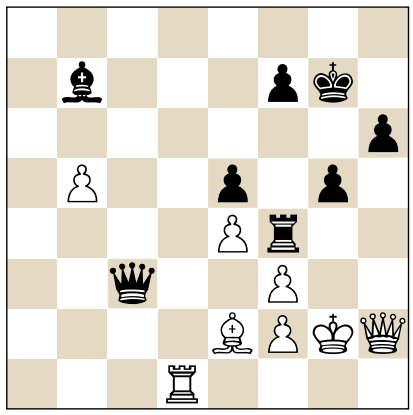
42...g5! 43.♕h3 ♕g6 44.♔f1 ♖h4 White's position is very unpleasant and eventually Levon does collapse.



45.♕g3 ♕e6 46.♔g2 ♖f4 47.♖c1 ♕d6 48.♖d1 ♕f6 49.♖c1 a5 50.b4 axb4 51.axb4 ♕d6 52.♖h1 ♔g7 53.b5 Getting the pawn to b5 looks like an improvement, but it doesn't change the situation. White still has the harder job.



53...♗c8 54.♕h2 ♕g6 55.♕h5 ♕f6 56.♕h2 ♔h7 57.♕g3 ♗b7 58.♖c1 ♕d6 59.♖d1 ♕f6 60.♖c1 ♕d6 61.♖h1 ♔g7 62.♕h3 ♖h4 63.♕g3 ♖f4 64.♕h3 ♖f6 65.♖d1 ♕c5 66.♕g3 ♖f4 67.♖h1 ♕c2 68.♕h2 ♖f6 69.♖e1 ♕d2 70.♔f1 ♖f4 71.♖d1 ♕c3 72.♔g2



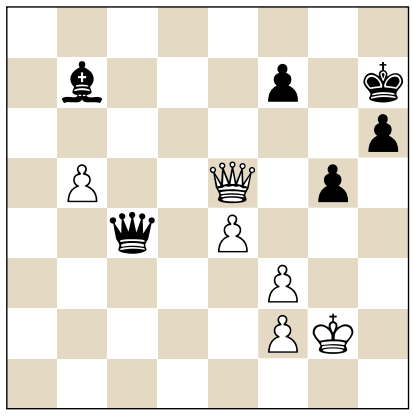
72...♕b2! Sergey somehow finds his way. Now Black is winning, as 73.♔f1 is met by 73...♗c8!.

73.♖h1 ♖h4 Black wins a piece and there is no perpetual check.

74.♕g3 ♖xh1 75.♔xh1 ♕xe2 76.♕xe5+ ♔h7 77.♔g2 77.♕f5+ ♔g8!, and the checks are over.

77...♕c4

Now it's just a matter of simple technique.



78.♕e7 ♗c8 79.b6 ♗a6 80.♔h2 ♕b3 81.♕a7 ♗f1 82.♔g1 ♗h3 83.f4 gxf4 84.♕c7 ♕d1+ 85.♔h2 ♕h5 86.♕xf4 ♗c8+ 87.♔g2 ♕g5+ 88.♔f3 ♕xf4+ 89.♔xf4 ♔g6 90.♔e5 h5 91.♔d6 h4 92.♔c7 ♗a6 93.♔b8 h3 94.♔a7 h2

White resigned.

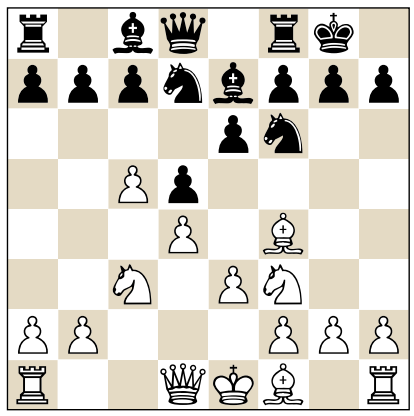
The second part of the game is quite impressive and the fact that I left it without comment is not because it is uninteresting, but because it is too difficult for me to comprehend.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

QO 1.5 – D37
Veselin Topalov
Vladimir Kramnik
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 (6)

There was quite a lot of speculation before this game, and indeed it turned into a very exciting battle!

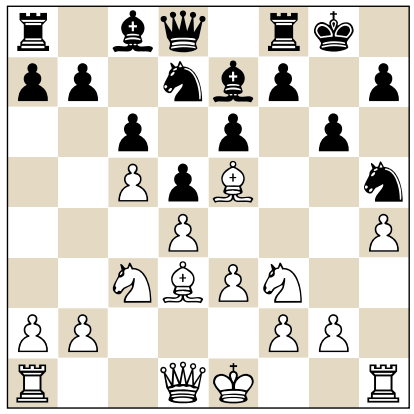
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7 Although Kramnik tends to switch from one line to another here, eventually, when it comes down to real business, he always comes back to his beloved Queen's Gambit Declined. **5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.c5**



7...♘h5 Aronian and Adams, the two other experts, play 7...c6 here, but Kramnik has his reasons to disagree with them. **8.♗e5** This creative idea seems a little dubious to me. However, if Black is not prepared it can be quite venomous. **8...c6** Kramnik decided not to capture the bishop, probably in an attempt to deviate from Topalov's studied lines.

On the other hand, 8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 g6 10.g4 ♘g7 11.h4 looks quite scary.

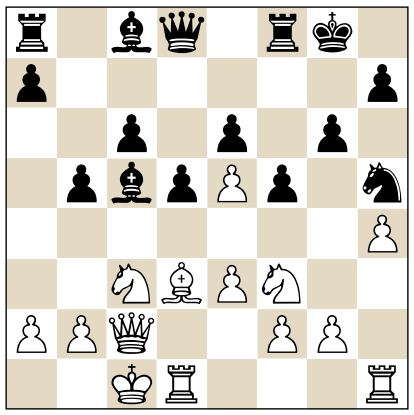
9.♗d3 g6 10.h4!?



Topalov no longer hides his plans. However, it seems that this move is not that awkward, even from a positional point of view.

10...f5

10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 f5 looks solid, but knowing Topalov and his team, there is no doubt there would have followed something along the lines of 12.♕c2! ♗xc5 13.0-0-0 b5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

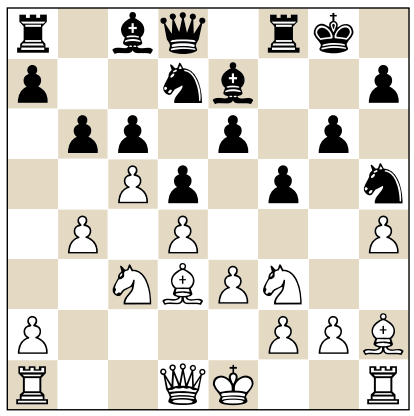
14.g4!! fxg4 15.♗xg6! and who knows what is going on.

11.♗h2 Showing another unexpected point of the move 10.h4!. The bishop can drop back now and there is no longer a way to capture it.

11...b6? This is just a mistake. I suspect Kramnik simply forgot that the generally useful inclusion of ...b6-b4, ...a5-a3, which usually gives Black some extra options, is not going to happen this time.

11...f4! should have been played right away. Now, after 12.0-0 e5!, the integrity of the pawn chain b7-c6-d5 ensures that Black's centre is stable enough for this breakthrough. The position is messy.

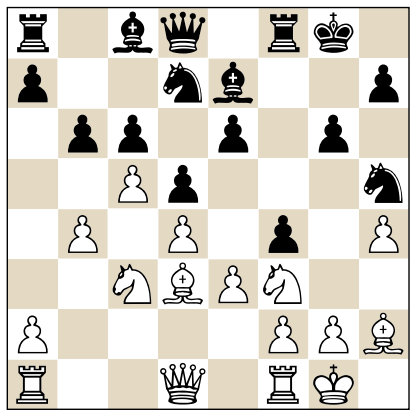
12.b4



12...f4?!

12...a5 was clearly the plan, but then 13.b5!, and while usually this yields nothing, the weakness of the e5-square is quite crucial here: 13...♗b7 14.cxb6 ♘xb6, and White can choose to exchange on c6, or not to. Either way the weakness of the e5-square will tell. Yet, this was better for Black than what happened in the game.

13.0-0



13...a5? This only makes things worse. Quite clearly, Kramnik was changing his plans after every move, something that usually happens when you miss some important details again and again.

13...e5 leads to disaster: 14.dxe5 bxc5 15.b5!, and everything falls apart: 15...♗b7 16.bxc6 ♗xc6 17.♗b5!.

Some ugly move like 13...♗b7 would have kept the game going, although it's clear by now that Black has done something slightly wrong.

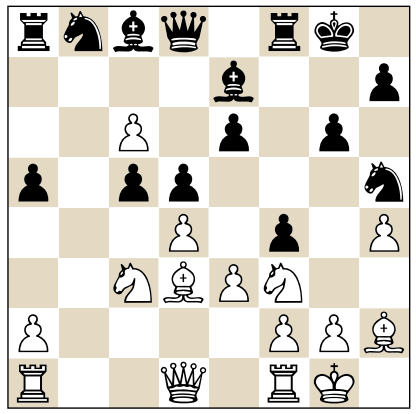
14.b5!

As said above, the inclusion of ...a5-a3 can only favour Black, but in this situation White obviously pushes the pawn forward.

14...bxc5

14...♗b7 would be a positional nightmare, even though it still avoided immediate collapse.

15.bxc6 ♘b8



16.♗b5!

With almost all Black's pieces on the back rank and one knight on h5, Topalov, at the press conference, rightly assessed Kramnik's position as lost.

16...♗a6

In bad positions all moves are bad, as some wise person once said, and although my engine has a different opinion, for the sake of convenience let's stick to that good old saying.

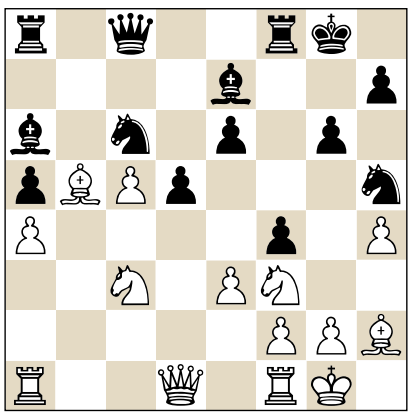
17.a4! ♕c8 18.dxc5 ♘xc6

Khanty-Mansiysk 2014 — **cat XXI**

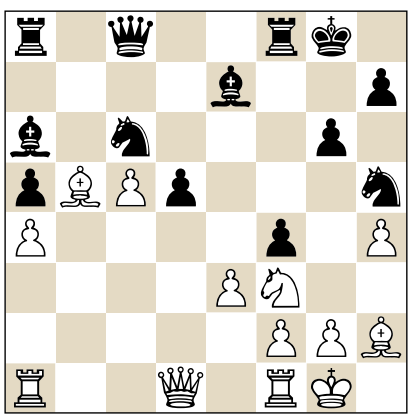
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		TPR
1 Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2770	* *	½ ½	½ ½	1 ½	½ ½	1 ½	½ ½	½ 1	8½	2843
2 Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2766	½ ½	* *	0 1	½ ½	½ ½	0 1	½ 1	½ ½	7½	2800
3 Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2787	½ ½	1 0	* *	1 ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ 0	0 1	7	2768
4 Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	IGM	AZE	2757	0 ½	½ ½	0 ½	* *	1 ½	0 1	1 ½	½ ½	7	2772
5 Dmitry Andreikin	IGM	RUS	2709	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	* *	½ 1	0 ½	1 ½	7	2779
6 Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2830	0 ½	1 0	½ ½	1 0	½ 0	* *	1 ½	½ ½	6½	2733
7 Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2758	½ ½	½ 0	½ 1	0 ½	1 ½	0 ½	* *	1 0	6½	2743
8 Veselin Topalov	IGM	BUL	2785	½ 0	½ ½	1 0	½ ½	0 ½	½ ½	0 1	* *	6	2718

VLADIMIR BARSKY

The art of ignoring. They don't shake hands but they do play fascinating games. In the end Veselin Topalov's smashing win in Round 6 was no more than a consolation prize.



19.♘xd5!? The most forcing and the most spectacular. A simple move like 19.♖c1 should also lead to victory eventually. **19...exd5** The following sequence is forced and leads to an endgame with an extra pawn for White.



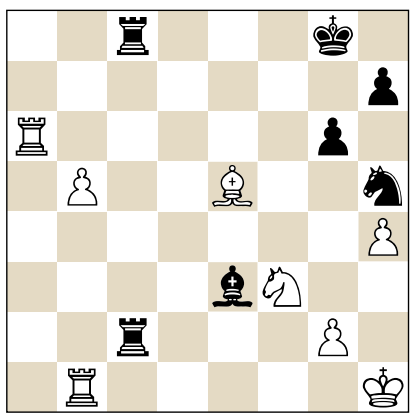
20.♕xd5+ ♔h8 21.♕xc6 ♕xc6 22.♗xc6 ♖ac8 23.♗b5 ♗xb5 24.axb5 ♗xc5 25.♖xa5 fxe3 26.fxe3 ♗xe3+ 27.♔h1 After the hurricane White has emerged a clear pawn up, and unfortunately for Black, the superiority of his pieces is still there.

27...♖c2

27...♘f6! was the only way to keep on fighting, finally getting the knight away from the edge of the board.

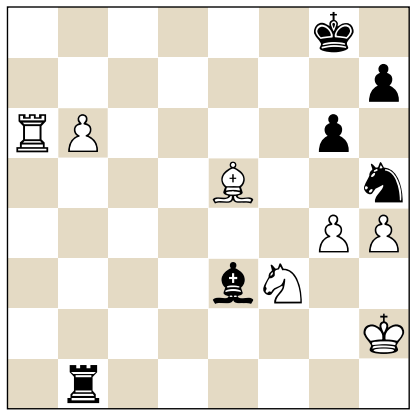
28.♖b1 ♖fc8 29.♖aa1 Topalov is precise.

29...♗b6 30.♗e5+ ♔g8 31.♖a6! ♗e3



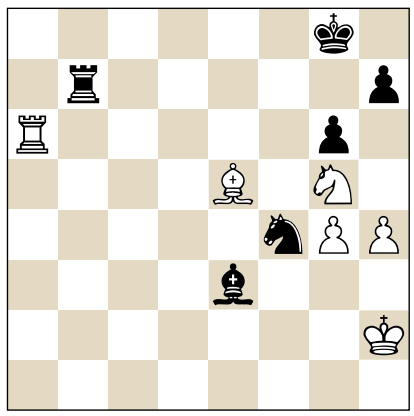
32.b6 This strong pawn, combined with the hopelessness of the knight on h5, secures White's victory.

32...♖c1+ 33.♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 34.♔h2 ♖b1 35.g4!



35...♗f4+

35...♘f4 loses as well, the nastiest way being: 36.b7!? ♖xb7 37.♘g5!, with a remarkable domination. Black loses a piece, see for yourself!

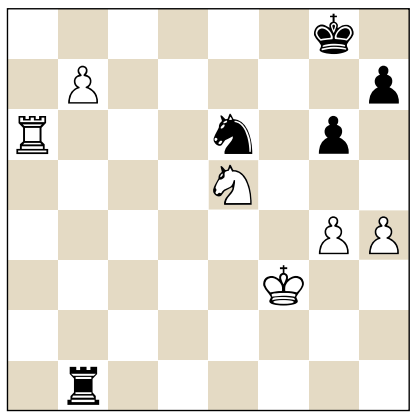


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The threat is 38.♖a8, check, and after 37...♔f8 38.♖f6+ the piece falls.

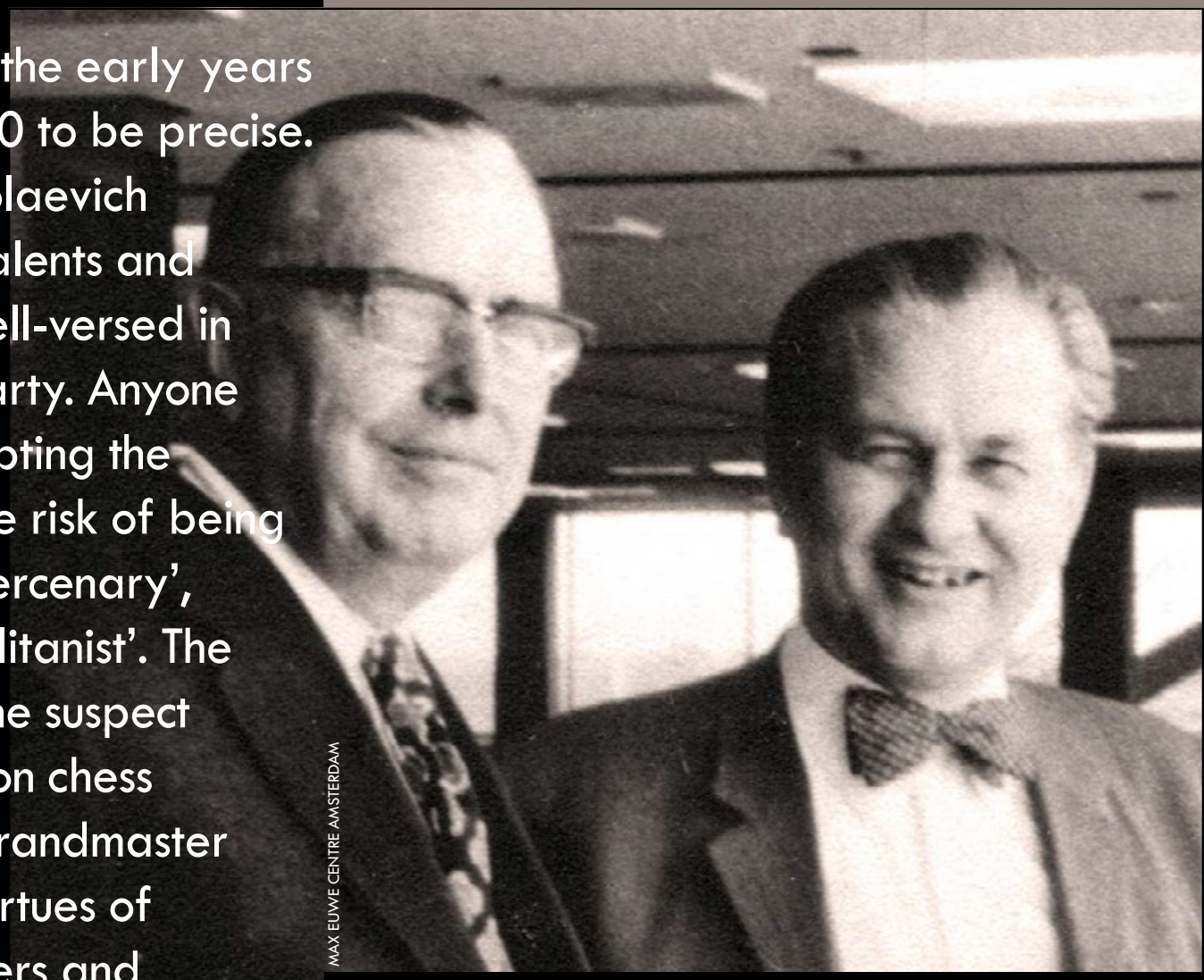
36.♔g2 ♗xe5 37.♘xe5 ♘f4+ 38.♔f3 ♘e6 39.b7

There is no way to save the knight and stop the pawn at the same time.



39...♖b3+ 40.♔f2 ♖b2+ 41.♔e3 Black resigned.

This smashing victory could have proved important for Topalov, but in the end it served merely as a matter of prestige. ■



MAX EUWE CENTRE AMSTERDAM

For Paul Keres (r.) it must have come as a shock that his citations from the systematic opening books of his good friend Max Euwe (l.) evoked such harsh criticism.

A letter from the KGB archives

The Panov Attack

The letter was written in the early years of the Cold War, in 1950 to be precise. The author is Vasily Nikolaevich Panov, a man of many talents and a staunch Communist, well-versed in the vocabulary of the Party. Anyone who is suspected of doubting the Communist cause runs the risk of being qualified as a 'fascist mercenary', a 'traitor' or a 'cosmopolitanist'. The man under attack and the suspect is Paul Keres. In a book on chess openings, the Estonian grandmaster has failed to extol the virtues of Russian and Soviet players and quoted extensively from 'imperialistic' sources. **Genna Sosonko** looks at the background of the letter, goes for a walk in history, and paints a portrait of the propagator of the Panov Variation. But first you should read the letter.

Dear Comrades,

The Estonian state publishing house has published the first volume of chess grandmaster Keres's theoretical work Open Games. For an author of theoretical research there is no nobler or more responsible task than to establish the indisputable authority of the pre-revolutionary Russian and Soviet chess schools, and to clearly and convincingly show the leading role of the Russian people in such a unique branch of culture as chess.

Paul Keres did not succeed in this task. Worse, he used the platform that had been provided for him for the unrestrained glorification of foreign theoreticians, even including fascist mercenaries and traitors to the Soviet people, whose 'theoretical' labours are of no value at all.

The achievements of Chigorin and other Russian and Soviet theoreticians are presented by Keres extremely patchily, and not as a unified whole. Meanwhile the supremacy of foreign theoreticians, in the majority of cases false and unproven, is claimed diligently and lovingly, just as is the supremacy of the author himself.

The justifiable anger and astonishment of Soviet chess players is provoked by the numerous systematic, completely baseless, offensive mentions of the fascist underling Bogoljubow, who is currently active in the American zone of Germany's occupation. Everyone knows that Bogoljubow's theoretical labours have never been of any worth, and his authority as a chess player, without even mentioning his odious political physiognomy, was down to zero a long time ago, if there can be any question of a fascist imposter having any authority at all.

Sadly Keres assiduously points out the few achievements of American theoreticians, even including unprecedented anonymous claims to authority: 'American chess players [which ones? when? – V.P.] suggest in this variation' and so on (p. 78). The phrase 'Fine recommends' is encountered more than 15 times, and 'Euwe recommends' and 'Tartakower recommends' more than 30 times. At the same time the name of the brilliant Russian player, the original creator of the majority of modern systems of attack and defence in the so-called 'Spanish Game', 'Evans Gambit' and other open games, to which Keres's book is in fact dedicated, is rarely encountered. The phrase 'Chigorin recommends' turns up only two or three times in the whole book, and is false in essence, because while Fine, Tartakower and Euwe, who didn't give anything to theory, can indeed only 'recommend'. Chigorin didn't recommend, but created these variations, he was an innovator and discoverer, and his role is reflected in Keres's book disgracefully stingily.

Keres reaches the height of his nonsense on page 177, when he tries to christen a variation that has long been known and diligently developed by Soviet theoreticians with the strange word 'siesta'. This term, which means a post-lunch rest, has never existed in chess literature. Not a single Soviet player and not a single theoretician has heard of it. Why in his supposedly serious book did Keres have to use an absurd, formalistic, non-existent name?! Unfortunately siestas are Keres's only innovation.

The question involuntarily arises, how do we explain these crude political and theoretical lapses, this worship of any foreign name, even the most insignificant, and this poor reflection of the services of pre-revolutionary Russian and Soviet theoreticians?

The box can easily be opened! Keres's work is not independent, original creative research, a critical review and investigation of the achievements of world chess culture. It is nothing other than a compilation of the openings reference books by Euwe and Fine that came out abroad after the war and the foreign manuals by Tartakower, Tarrasch and others that have been known for a long time and condemned by Soviet critics. Keres himself vouches for the lack of independence and critical judgement of his work: 'If we assume that there are no serious mistakes in the analyses given above [by Euwe and Fine – V.P.], then it follows that we should probably recognize this variation as the most promising for White.'

This absence of creative independence and originality and slapdash attitude is the ideal basis for the adulation of foreignness, for cosmopolitanism, and for political and theoretical mistakes.

Surprise is provoked by the policy of non-intervention adopted in relation to the author by the Estonian state publishing house, which did not subject the book to diligent political editing, and also by the role of the translator and chess editor I.L. Mayzelis, who was supposed to correct the author's mistakes.

Keres's cosmopolitan, objectivist book creates a completely false impression of the theory and history of domestic and foreign chess art.

Moscow, May 10, 1950
V.N. Panov, Master of sport in chess, member of the Communist Party.

Vasily Panov

This document was found comparatively recently in the main KGB archive in Moscow and has never been published before. Regardless of its content we can acknowledge that Panov's review can be considered an example of the journalism of the time, as well as some of the journalism of today's Russia.

In the late forties and early fifties of the last century the atmosphere in the Soviet Union was saturated with anti-Semitism: this was the era of the rabid battle against 'rootless cosmopolitans', as citizens of Jewish ethnicity were disgracefully referred to.

'Cosmopolitanism is the ideological weapon of American reactionism', 'Cosmopolitanism is bourgeois nationalism', 'The Soviet people call the rootless cosmopolitans to account' – these and similar headlines adorned articles back then in *Pravda*, *Izvestiya* and all the other newspapers in the country.

A *Pravda* editorial of January 28, 1949 said: 'They have forfeited their responsibility to the people; they are carriers of rootless cosmopolitanism, which is deeply disgusting and hostile to a Soviet person; they hinder the development of Soviet literature, slowing down its forward movement. The sense of Soviet national pride is alien to them. They try to discredit advanced manifestations of our literature and art, wildly descending on patriotic, politically purposeful works on the pretext of their alleged artistic imperfections. Bourgeois cosmopolitans preach disgusting idolatry of the United States, cynically asserting that American expansion is a means of spreading high culture.'

All this wasn't limited to the mass sacking of Jews and the impossibility for them to find work in Moscow and other big cities in the Soviet Union; there was also direct repression, which achieved its apotheosis with the 'Doctors' Plot' in 1953, the groundless accusation, instigated by Stalin, of an alleged conspiracy of prominent Soviet medical specialists, most of them Jewish, to murder leading government and party officials.

The campaign against secret agents of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a battle for national supremacy in the spheres of science and invention, and administrative measures against people suspected of 'idolatry of the West'. A ricocheting rock from this campaign hit Paul Keres.

The review of Keres's book was obviously written by order of the KGB, as the state security agency was keeping tabs on Paul Keres particularly intensively at that time. The Estonian grandmaster's reputation was 'stained'. He was born in and had lived in bourgeois Estonia until 1940, had played on German territory and in occupied countries during the war

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(in the terminology of the time – 'collaborating with the fascists'), and even had tried, apparently, to leave for Sweden.

In those days you could end up in Siberia after a review like that, and the fact that Keres was a grandmaster, and moreover one of the strongest in the world, meant nothing: back then heads flew, and worse.

Although Estonia shared with the other republics of the Soviet Union a political system, economic principles and all the rules of the game in the Great Empire, the influence of the West, its culture and mentality, was felt here more than anywhere else.

Panov's internal review wasn't a one-off volley. Two years later he wrote: 'Apart from the long-established magazines *Shakhmatny Vestnik*, *Shakhmatny Listok* and *Shakhmatnoe Obozrenie*, pre-revolutionary Russian chess literature was under the influence of foreign theoreticians of the so-called "new school" of Steinitz and Tarrasch, deliberately concealing the enormous contribution of Russian chess players to world chess art and actively fighting against Chigorin's advanced creative views.

'These cosmopolitan tendencies and the obsequiousness towards foreignness intensified significantly after Chigorin's death, when an extremely unfavourable environment developed on the basis of the general ideological collapse of Russian bourgeois culture in the chess and sporting worlds. People who were hardly connected with their native land were numbered among and active in the top dozen masters representing pre-revolutionary Russia in the international chess arena, going from one tournament to another as apolitical practical professionals, examining theoretical issues from a narrow-minded "variation" point of view. Among these cosmopolitan masters we can name Nimzowitsch, Bernstein, Alapin, Znosko-Borovsky and even to some extent

Mikhail Chigorin, the father of Russian chess. According to Panov his losses in the World Championship matches against Steinitz in 1889 and 1892 were the result of unfavourable external circumstances and the Russian's chivalrous attitude to the game.

the pre-revolutionary Russian champion Rubinstein.

'What little right these masters had to consider themselves representatives of the Russian people and how their patriotism really looked was demonstrated in their attitude towards the Great October Revolution. After 1917 they all found themselves in the White émigré camp and repatriated themselves abroad.

'The situation in chess literature did not change much in the first post-revolutionary years either. In the beginning the Soviet book market was awash with translations of theoretical works by representatives of the decadent, formalistic school of hypermodernists and its particularly colourful and fruitful theoretician – Savielly Tartakower. In his four-volume work "The Ultramodern Chess Game" there was no objective high evaluation of the Russian chess school.

'All the guiding directives and statements of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on ideological issues also had a direct relationship to chess publications and gave Soviet chess players the correct orientation in their work. The battle to depict the supremacy of the Russian people in the most varied spheres of culture led to the creation of extremely interesting original research works on the history of science, culture and art, and to the restored reputation of the services of national cultural figures, which had been concealed before the revolution.' (*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1952 No. 3)

In 1968 Panov's book on Mikhail Ivanovich Chigorin was published. The author devoted particular attention to the question of why Chigorin lost his World Championship match with Wilhelm Steinitz. We'll let Panov speak again here: 'Alien to Mikhail Ivanovich were all kinds of "sporting and tactical" considerations such as studying your opponent's opening repertoire to choose specifically the openings in which he is weak, or playing variations that he hardly knows.

'Chigorin's character was not inclined to try and achieve victory by methods that were not pure chess, and it was even unpleasant for him to catch his opponent in a previously-prepared variation. He was like the ancient Russian prince Sviatoslav, who despised surprise attacks on his enemies and so warned them: "I'm coming for you!" Chigorin didn't even entertain the concept that out of sporting considerations (for example, to preserve the lead in a match or "win the colour") he should deliberately play "for a draw" and completely avoid a sharp battle "to the last drop of blood". In the dimensions and multifacetedness of his brilliant gift, in the "X-ray" depth of his combinational vision, in his art of positional manoeuvring, and in the precision of his calculating and mastery of analysis Chigorin was clearly superior to the world champion at two stages of the game – the middlegame and the endgame.

'In his opening erudition Chigorin also surpassed Steinitz, but only in the

sphere of open games. But closed and semi-closed openings were Chigorin's Achilles heel in the eighties. In his preparation for the match the world champion studied all these sporting deficiencies of Chigorin, about which he had previously been "kindly" informed from Petersburg by Alapin [Semyon Zinovievich Alapin, 1856-1923 – G.S.], who had voluntarily and enthusiastically taken upon himself the unattractive role of stool pigeon. This detailed familiarity with Chigorin's sporting and creative style in combination with the poor physical condition of the Russian maestro, who was tired from his tribulations at sea and suffering from the unusual heat, brought Steinitz victory in the match.'

Lasker comes into the same chapter in passing too. Saying that 'the era of sporting hairsplitting is upon us', Panov writes: 'Practical, purposeful, calculating and economical in the expenditure of his strength, knowing the value of money and time well, Lasker was the personification of businesslike efficiency and bourgeois common sense. Evidently for Lasker one's educational level was merely a symbol of respectability and weightiness in bourgeois society, where a chess maestro's stock price was not very high. In mathematics, according to the opinions of experts, Lasker did not distinguish himself. As a philosopher, in his works he did not rise above the average level in innumerable idealistic essays, which is also demonstrated by their titles, "The Struggle", "Understanding the World" and "The Philosophy of the Incomplete". Doctor of mathematics and philosophy Lasker was engaged in what sounds barbaric to the ear of a Soviet person when talking about a scientific figure: trade speculating and commerce in general.'

'Knowing the value of money and time well, Lasker was the personification of business-like efficiency and bourgeois common sense.'

All these qualities of the world champion were no coincidence, as Lasker was the son of a cantor, Panov emphasized. These kinds of quotes can be found throughout almost the entire book.

■ ■ ■

Readers may have formed the impression that we're dealing with some kind of very limited person who was obsessed with specific ideas. Not at all! Vasily Nikolaevich Panov (1906-1973) was an extremely interesting, multitalented person. In the first place, he really was a very strong chess player. In 1929 the young Panov stunned everyone by winning 11 games in a row in the Moscow Championship and achieving a brilliant victory in the tournament. He had a vividly-expressed attacking style, he viscerally sensed the initiative, and even the leading lights of the day weren't comfortable sitting at the board with the Moscow maestro. He beat Boleslavsky (twice), Kotov (twice), Lilienthal (three times), Ragozin (twice), Smyslov, Taimanov, Tolush, Furman and Levenfish. Even today you can learn how to conduct an attack from Panov's best games.

But Panov's name isn't only known for those games and a variation in the Caro-Kann; Panov was an unusually

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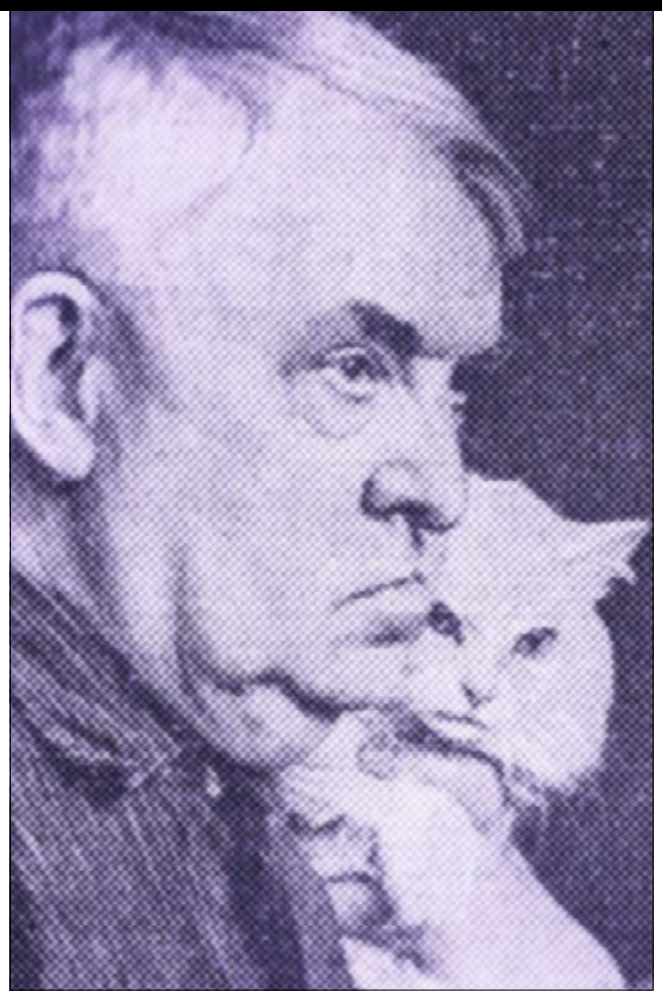
prolific author. Vasily Nikolaevich wrote 12 books, which were translated into many languages; their total print run was more than a million (!) copies.

Besides books Panov wrote a multitude of tournament reviews, articles and feuilletons. 'In the Language of an Augur', 'In the Belly of a Chess Knight', 'Don't Manufacture Prodigies' – just by their titles we can judge the passionate tone of Vasily Nikolaevich's publications.

In the first edition of a book by Panov the following passage can be read: 'Once very late, towards the end of the Moscow International Tournament (1925), around one in the morning, I was going home when suddenly I saw Bogoljubow in Strastnaya Square by the parking places that had appeared back then for private automobiles. Guffawing from the depths of his throat, drunk, red-faced, with his fur neck-piece flung open, he helped two dubious damsels into the car, who were giggling, wriggling and struggling, but nevertheless got into the car along with the triumphant hamster, and it sped off in the direction of the hotel. I walked and thought about how Bogoljubow's ordinary behaviour contradicts our Soviet, Communist ethics and is unworthy of a champion of the USSR. Of course, Bogoljubow should immediately be torn away from the midst of his petty bourgeois, burgher surroundings, where money is the only idol, and moved to a family in the USSR, given a chess job, ideologically re-educated in the constant company of Soviet youth, and then with his immense gift he could bring us considerable benefit.'

In subsequent editions that passage was removed: the attitude towards Bogoljubow in the country became less harsh, and in the late eighties it was completely reversed.

Panov had a hare lip, and there were some things he couldn't pronounce. 'A lashting impweshun', Boris Spassky imitated Panov. That



Vasily Panov's greatest love was for cats. He called them 'my best friends and co-authors'.

was how Vasily Nikolaevich replied to a Moscow master when asked what impression was made on him by a game this master had just played: 'Lashting! A lashting impweshun!'

The characterizations given by Vasily Nikolaevich were scathing and expressive, and many of his expressions were remembered for a long time. In the sixties the creeping inflation of the master title began: the number of masters in the country increased dramatically. 'I consider every opponent a master now. If, of course, in the process of playing he doesn't prove the opposite', Panov reacted. On another occasion Vasily Nikolaevich heard that a grandmaster had been complaining about his lack of form. 'You're telling me. I've been out of form my whole life', Panov announced with a stony face.

His daughter remembered him as a cultured man: 'From as early as I remember, I never saw my father doing nothing. All his time was occupied to the maximum, planned many days in advance. If he wasn't writing books or articles, he was doing something else, for example, translating from English the stories he particularly liked by Henry Slesar, Saki, Donald Honig... He spent a lot of time translating Agatha Christie's detective novels.'

A bibliophile and collector, Panov wandered around flea markets and antiquarian bookshops. He read *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* in the original, collected translations and was disgusted by careless ones. He adored animals and birds, but Panov's greatest love was for cats. Chizhik lived in his family for 15 years. Then Marquis appeared, with whom Panov never parted. He called his cats 'my best friends and co-authors'.

There was a big saucepan on the desk in his study. If some thought came to Vasily Nikolaevich's mind, he wrote it down and tossed the piece of paper into the saucepan. When he was asked to write something urgently for *Shakhmaty v SSSR* or *64*, Panov dipped his hand into the saucepan...

■ ■ ■

He was born in 1906 and his childhood and early school years came in the pre-revolutionary period. In 1917 his family moved from provincial Kaluga to Moscow. This date coincided with the establishment of Soviet power in the country. He was very young then, and we can't know if the new ideology was an internal conviction for him, a sincere choice or just subordination to the circumstances presented by life. And who can know? And where does the fluid boundary run between these concepts?

For a successful career it was desirable to belong to the majority ethnicity, be a party member and have an irreproachable biography. While everything was fine for Panov on the first two counts, there was a flaw in Vasily Nikolaevich's background. And not a small one. His father wasn't a financial inspector, as he always wrote on forms, but an assessor, which in the Soviet era always put you on guard,

even if in essence they were the same thing. But most importantly, Panov's father was a nobleman, and not just a nobleman, but a regional leader of the nobility!

That kind of background was extremely vulnerable in the twenties and thirties, and after the war too the little jokes by the head of the Sport Committee's chess section Mikhail Beilin couldn't fail to irritate Panov. Quite often Vasily Nikolaevich erupted in angry tirades about another researcher of the life of Chigorin – the historian Isaak Zalmanovich Romanov: how could a man with a name and patronymic like that understand the soul of a great Russian chess player? And most importantly: how did this Romanov acquire the surname of the ruling dynasty? 'Perhaps the historian's surname was Romanovich before the revolution, and he just "lost" the last letters. After all, some people lost a great deal during the revolution', Beilin smiled and looked enquiringly at the immediately darkening Panov.

■ ■ ■

Looking at Panov's texts from over half a century ago isn't an attempt to reheat yesterday's dinner; in fact it's edible today too. The interior design has changed, but the basic layout has been preserved in today's Russia, and the environment of those days has been partly thrown out and partly restored according to the needs of time. The abbreviation MMI in the Soviet Union was changed to MMIP (Mass Media Information and Propaganda). In fact information was propaganda and propaganda was distributed in the guise of information. This phenomenon is well known in today's Russia. Suspicion, the search for potential enemies anywhere and everywhere, the inflation of achievements, a sense of historical destiny, a division of the world into ours and the foreign can be noted in many aspects of Russian life nowadays too.

I wondered, what would have become of a multitalented person like Vasily Nikolaevich Panov if he had lived to the time of perestroika? He would probably have become a member of the 'Union of Descendants of Russian Nobility', admitted that he had kept the little cross his father bequeathed to him his entire life, and, although he never showed this to anyone, always had believed in God.

Saul's transformation into Paul may have been instantaneous or may have taken a long time, but the fact that Panov never forgot to mention: 'In 1951 I graduated from the evening school of Marxism-Leninism run by the Moscow City Committee of the Communist Party', would have been pushed somewhere far away by him, to the periphery of his memory.

A SIESTA-SZANATÓRIUM
NEMZETKÖZI SAKKVERSENYE
BUDAPEST, 1928. SZEPTEMBER 20—OKTÓBER 1.
I. CAPABLANCA, II. MARSHALL, III—IV. KMOCH ÉS SPIELMANN.
MARÓCZY GÉZA
ÉS A LEGNIVÁLÓBB KÜLFÖLDI SAKKÍRÓK KÖZREMŰKÖDÉSÉVEL SZERKESZTETTÉK:
CHALUPETZKY FERENC ÉS TÓTH LÁSZLÓ.
A BEVEZETŐ MEGNYITÁSELMÉLETI TANULMÁNYT ÍRTA: MÜLLER H.
SIESTA- SANATORIUM BUDAPEST, I. RÁTH GYÖRGY-U. 3.
— ÁRA 4 PENGŐ. —
MAGYAR SAKKVILÁG, KECSKEMÉT, 1929.

The Siesta Variation (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 d6 5.c3 f5) that Panov mentions in his letter does not refer to the once popular Spanish afternoon nap, but is named after the Siesta Sanatorium in Budapest, where Capablanca successfully employed the variation in 1928. The sanatorium is pictured on the colourful cover of the book that Geza Maroczy wrote on the tournament that was won by the same Capablanca.

Or would he have gone into politics? Which party would have been energetic enough and concerned enough about society for a man like Panov to prefer in the conditions of modern Russia? Probably not some so-called opposition party of today's Russia. But whichever colour Panov's preferences would have been inclined towards, one thing is clear – Vasily Nikolaevich wouldn't have failed under any government.

People of this type never fail: they just take on the hue of their surroundings. This is either a flaw or an ability, however you want to see it, and whether this characteristic is good or bad is exclusively for the sphere of morals.

True, there's another alternative: finding himself in the rarefied atmosphere of freedom in the late eighties, when talking and writing about anyone and anything suddenly became possible, he might have died from an overabundance of oxygen. Landing on something green a chameleon turned green, on something blue it turned blue, and on a chocolate bar it even turned into chocolate, but one day, when it ended up on a tartan rug, the chameleon burst into tiny pieces.

■ ■ ■

Why did I write about all this? – the reader may ask me, not burdened with the concepts of bourgeois and socialist approaches to chess art, condemnation of cosmopolitans – Nimzowitsch, Rubinstein, Bernstein and Tartakower, or anger about the 'fascist underling Bogoljubow, who is currently active in the American zone of Germany's occupation'? What does this have to do with chess today?

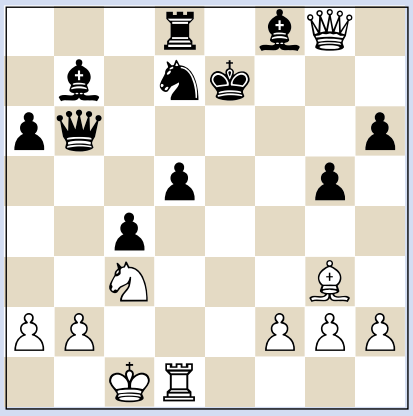
I'll reply: nothing. It's just that a wonderful document from that amazing, fairy tale time fell into the author's hands and I wanted to show you a piece of the history of our game and the country where professional chess in the modern sense of the word was born and where it was once raised to an unparalleled height. ■

Yochanan Afek

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and everyone of us. All six positions below were reached in recent Dutch events. Six opportunities to shine were missed. Can you do better?

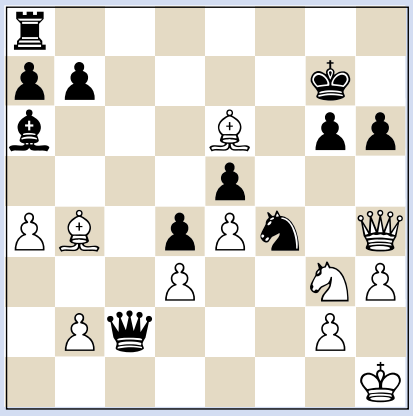
★★☆☆☆



1. White to play

White was in a sacrificial mood and felt the moment to cash in had come: **21.♖e1+ ♔f6 22.♗c7? ♕xb2+! 23.♔xb2 ♗a3+ 24.♔xa3 ♖xg8** and White was a pawn behind with no real compensation. What did he miss?

★★☆☆☆



2. White to play

White played the tempting **34.♘f5+ gxf5 35.♕e7+ ♔h8 36.♕f6+ ♔h7 37.♕xf5+ ♘g6 38.♕f7+ ♔h8 39.♔h2** but after the accurate **39...♕c1** a draw was agreed in view of the unavoidable perpetual check. Could he have done better?

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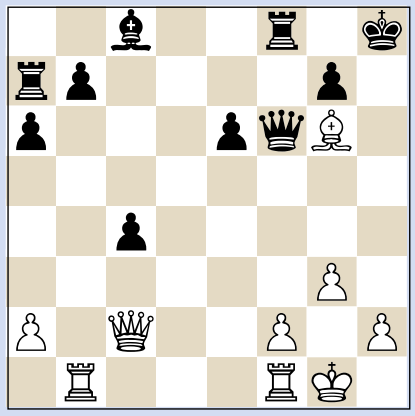

3. White to play

In this promising position White went **23.♖b6 ♗d7 24.♗e4 ♕d4 25.♕e2 ♔g8 26.♖fb1 c3 27.♖6b4 ♕d2 28.♕h5?? ♕xf2+** and was lucky to draw when Black returned the favour further on. Could White have struck in the diagrammed position?

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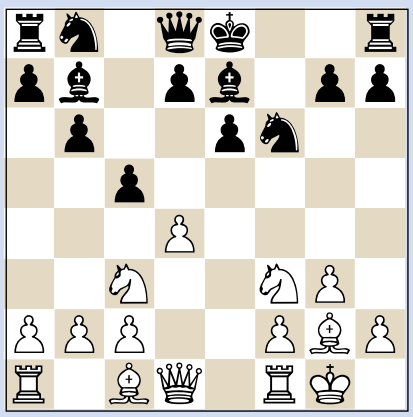

4. White to play

Following Black's 9...♗e7, White sensibly increased his pressure on the dark squares by **10.♗f4 0-0 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♗d6 ♗xd6 13.♕xd6** But after **13...♕b6 14.♕xb6 axb6 15.♘e5 ♗xg2 16.♔xg2 ♘d5** he did not achieve more than a draw on move 44. What was it that both players overlooked at such an early stage of the game?

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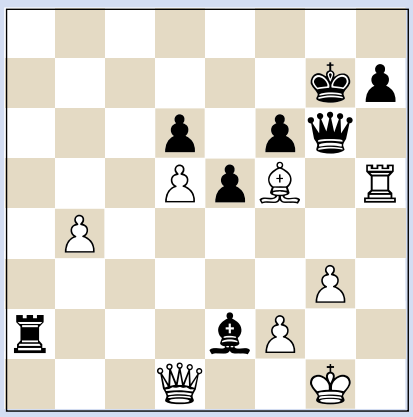
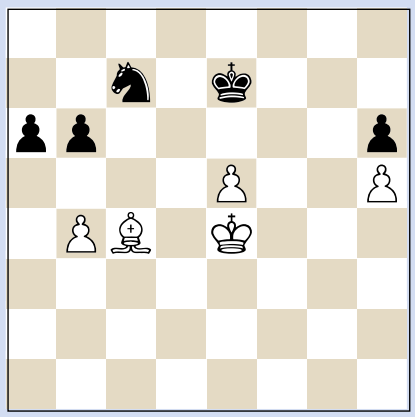


5. White to play

With just 3 minutes on his clock White found nothing better than a difficult rook ending after **42.♕xe2? ♖xe2 43.♗xg6 hxg6 44.♖h4 ♖d2! 45.♖c4 ♖xd5 46.♖c7+ ♔h6 47.♖d7 ♔g5 48.♔g2 ♔f5** which Black eventually converted. Could you propose a better idea to save the game?

★★★★★



6. Black to play

As the white king prepares a deadly invasion on the kingside, Black met the threat with **51...♔f8 52.♔f5 ♔g7** but after **53.e6 a5 54.b5 a4** 54...♔f8 55.♔g6 ♔e7 56.♔xh6 ♔f6 57.♔h7. **55.e7 a3 56.♔e5 ♘e8 57.♔e6 ♘f6 58.♗a2 ♘e8 59.♔d7** he had to call it a day. Could you handle the defence more successfully?

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. **Solutions on page 97**

Yerevan

10 Questions to European Champion Alexander Motylev

He started out as a prodigy, was Russian Champion in 2001 and continued to show his exceptional talent by winning the B-Group in Wijk aan Zee in 2006 (together with Magnus Carlsen) and taking first prize in Poikovsky in 2009. Yet these days Alexander Motylev is mainly respected as a coach for the Russian Chess Federation. Which didn't stop the Muscovite from sweeping the field at the European Championship in Yerevan. Seeded 33rd, 34-year-old Motylev was in a class of his own and finished a full point ahead of the pack. An apt moment for a revealing Q and A.

1 In the past years you have been working more and more as a trainer. Did it feel like a holiday to play again at the European Championship and did that contribute to your success?

'Probably after I started working as a trainer I started valuing practical play more and getting more pleasure out of it. Really, after pressing the "space" bar for several days, any game seems like a breath of fresh air. Besides that, before I started my career as a trainer I considered myself a chess professional, and accordingly thought more about the various financial aspects. For example, the European Championship was always mainly a selection tournament for the World Cup from my point of view. Working as a trainer brought me a more stable financial situation, and now, when I participate in tournaments, I can just play for my own pleasure. And thirdly, again because of my work as a trainer, I simply started studying chess much more. Probably even the most untalented person could learn a lot by spending so much time with the strongest players in the world. So the answer to this question is definitely yes!'

2 Do you see any similarities with Vladimir Potkin's win in 2011? He is one of your colleagues as a trainer and also won the European Championship in one of his rare tournaments.

'Yes, of course, especially as Volodya Potkin is not only my colleague, but also a close friend. We live in neigh-

Time to celebrate. European Champion Alexander Motylev happily raises his glass as Armenian WGM Elina Danielian proposes a toast.

bouring houses in the town of Kotelniki (Moscow Oblast). We went for walks together in Yerevan every evening and went to the rounds together. I think it just wasn't that interesting for him to win the European Championship for a second time, so he shared his secrets with me. Thank you, Volodya! Ah, if Kuzminskaya Street knew it had such a concentration of European chess champions... By the way, Evgeny Najer, who started with four out of four in Yerevan, is also our neighbour! And although he wasn't very lucky at the finish in Armenia, I think he really must win this tournament soon! Jerusalem awaits!'

3 Did you have to ask permission from the Russian Chess Federation or from Sergey Karjakin to play in Yerevan?

'Yes, because of the partial clash with the Candidates' tournament I really wasn't sure if it was worth my while going to the European Championship. To be honest, I wasn't certain about my trip to Yerevan at all. The last European Championship in Legnica went very badly for me. So I consulted with my ward Sergey Karjakin about participating in the European Championship. And he not only gave his approval for me to play, but also instructed me that I shouldn't think about the World Cup, but just fight for first place. At the time I took this comment as a joke, but later it turned out to be prophetic.'

4 You had a great tournament without any hiccoughs. You won five games in a row, didn't lose a single game, ended a full point ahead of the rest. Were there any critical moments?

'As I already said, one of the critical moments was even before the tournament, when I was wondering whether it was worth going to the European Championship. The draw in the first round, with a couple of blunders along the way, didn't add to my confidence. But then, strange as it may seem, everything worked out and went down a well-trodden path. My very difficult win in the second round against the young Norwegian player Aryan Tari was probably very important. After that I can point out my wins against Eljanov and Smirin. Those games were hard for me mainly from a psychological point of view – I was already in the lead by that time, and I had to struggle with my subconscious desire to play more strongly, without any real risk. The Sofia rules probably helped me a lot – when neither you nor your opponent can offer a draw, it's much easier to reject all thoughts about that and play the position.'

5 In our previous issue, Levon Aronian said that he didn't understand what people mean when they speak of good form. Did you feel you were in good form?

'I didn't have that feeling at the tournament – where I was

really shining was at the training sessions with Sergey Karjakin that ended a week before Yerevan. I cracked studies like nuts. Usually I take one of Jacob Aagaard's books to tournaments and solve positions from them to find out what form I'm in. I remember that at the last Super Final of the Russian Championship in Novgorod I was really concerned about the results of my attempts, but it was already too late to do anything about it. But I don't think I even opened Aagaard's "Calculation" in Yerevan, apparently subconsciously feeling that everything was fine.'

6 You are the 2014 European Champion. Yet it cannot be denied that most of the highest rated European players stay away from this championship. Does that detract from the significance of the title? Does it spoil some of your fun?

'I'd say that with 15 "seven hundreds" the championship seemed strong enough to me. I think the European Championships are constantly getting stronger, or perhaps I'm getting older with each year. To be honest, the absence of say Karjakin or Kramnik doesn't worry me too much, if only because this is already a well-established tradition. The European Championship was established in this format – a strong Swiss without the megastars. Stars don't "ride the metro" – they don't play in open tournaments. Only Vassily Ivanchuk regularly comes down to the people. 'So the title of European Champion hasn't lost any significance in my eyes – it is what it is. What attracted my attention, however, was that my performance in Yerevan turned out to be better than that of the winner of the Candidates' tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk – that probably says something.'

'My performance in Yerevan turned out to be better than that of the winner of the Candidates' tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk – that probably says something.'

7 Shouldn't it be the ambition of the European Chess Union to lure all the best players to their main individual championship?

'On the whole, yes. That would increase the significance of both the European Chess Union and the European Championship. But a serious financial infusion would definitely be needed for that. The prizes at the European Championship only seem OK for ordinary players, but they're ridiculously small for players in the top 20. You can go another way, of course, as FIDE did at the last World Cup. Only let players into the World Cup by rating if they took part in the continental events. But that seems like pie in the sky to me at the moment.'

8 You are a trainer working for the Russian Chess Federation. What does your work consist of and how much time do you have to play yourself?

'I work with Sergey Karjakin most of the time. The trainers have two or three sessions a year with the team and all the official events – usually one or two tournaments a year. Mainly support is given for theoretical preparation and the study of openings. Everyone understands that this is far from the most important thing, but you still can't get away from it. In contrast to the widely-believed cliché, a lot of time is spent on physical preparation. As for me, I have no limits on my tournament appearances, except for my free time. But I have virtually none of that.'

9 You work a lot with the very best players in your country. Are you allowed to use any opening information you have looked at together? What sort of agreements do you have in these matters?

'Yes, of course, this can be a problem – on the team everyone works together, then they become opponents at individual tournaments. Nevertheless, we have a very friendly atmosphere on the team and no restrictions, other than gentlemen's agreements. In very rare cases, when a particularly valuable novelty comes out, there may be some verbal agreements between players, but this happens very rarely. I remember, after the World Team Championship in Bursa, Grischuk banned me from playing ♗g5 against him in the Najdorf. This was more a joke than anything, and he removed this restriction from me after I lost to him at the ACP World Rapid Cup in Odessa.'

10 Could you imagine a life as a full-time trainer, without any tournaments that you play in yourself? Or will you continue to play in tournaments for many years to come?

'At present I can't imagine myself working only as a trainer. To be honest, this seems boring to me. I think I'll play as long as I get pleasure from playing. The desire to end your career usually arises when you feel that you can't keep playing at your level. With me it's the opposite, for some reason my rating has gone down to 2650, but still I felt stronger than, say, I did in 2009, when I had a rating of 2700. Perhaps this confidence wasn't backed by results, but I still had it.'

And finally the bonus question: did you miss any essential questions? Do you have anything to add?

'After I won the European Championship I received lots of congratulations – that was completely unexpected. I'd like to thank all the people who supported me and were happy about my victory. I think that for me to win this tournament a lot of things had to go right, like a jigsaw puzzle. If even a small detail somewhere had gone differently, nothing would have come of it. I can't thank everyone who helped me in one way or another, but I'd like to mention a couple of names. Before I left for Yerevan I went into the Central Chess Club to see my friend, the new executive director of the Russian Chess Federation, Mark Glukhovsky. And he said to me, "Sanya, I'm already tired of your mediocre play! But don't worry, everything will be fine in Yerevan! Yesterday I saw Boris Naumovich Postovsky and asked him to look after you! The main thing is, listen to him!" [Boris Postovsky, honoured trainer of Russia and respected by many GMs for his great knowledge and expertise, was not only captain of the Russian team on various occasions, but also captained the national team of the US. These days he lives in the USA, but his ties with Russian chess continue to be warm and tight – DJtG.] As with Sergey Karjakin, I smiled at the joke and promised Mark that I would obey Boris Naumovich unquestioningly. Fortunately for me, Boris Naumovich didn't forget this request or treat it lightly, but really did take me under his wing. During the tournament I received a whole array of valuable practical pieces of advice from him. By carrying out his instructions to the letter I became the latest confirmation of his reputation as a kingmaker.'

Providing Alexander Motylev with 'a whole array of valuable practical pieces of advice', Boris Naumovich Postovsky confirmed his reputation as a kingmaker.

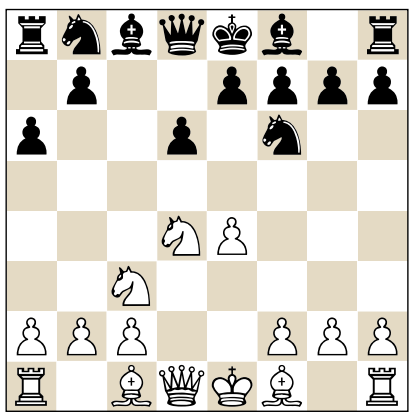
Fifteen years of EIC	When	Where	European Champion	World ranking	Topseed	World ranking
Starting with Saint-Vincent in 2000, the European Individual Championship has been held 15 times. Only on three occasions players from the World top-10 took part. Vassily Ivanchuk tried his luck four times. In Antalya in 2004 the Ukrainian was the only top-seed ever to win the title. So far Ivanchuk has been the only player from the World's top-20 to become European Champion. Spain's Paco Vallejo was the top-seed who fared worst in his shot at the title in 2009, when he had to settle for 82nd place.	2000	Saint-Vincent	**Pavel Tregubov** (RUS)	62	Georgiev	27
	2001	Ohrid	**Emil Sutovsky** (ISR)	84	Gurevich	17
	2002	Batumi	**Bartłomiej Macieja** (POL)	134	Aleksandrov	32
	2003	Istanbul	**Zurab Azmaiparashvili** (GEO)	23	Ivanchuk	12
	2004	Antalya	**Vassily Ivanchuk** (UKR)	12	Ivanchuk	12
	2005	Zegrze	**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu** (ROM)	35	Ivanchuk	6
	2006	Kuşadası	**Zdenko Kozul** (CRO)	123	Ivanchuk	7
	2007	Dresden	**Vladislav Tkachiev** (FRA)	56	Jakovenko	18
	2008	Plovdiv	**Sergey Tiviakov** (NED)	85	Movsesian	25
	2009	Budva	**Evgeny Tomashevsky** (RUS)	60	Vallejo	28
	2010	Rijeka	**Ian Nepomniachtchi** (RUS)	35	Almasi	23
	2011	Aix-les-Bains	**Vladimir Potkin** (RUS)	95	Svidler	17
	2012	Plovdiv	**Dmitry Jakovenko** (RUS)	21	Caruana	7
	2013	Legnica	**Alexander Moiseenko** (UKR)	49	Jakovenko	21
	2014	Yerevan	**Alexander Motylev** (RUS)	89	Bacrot	19

NOTES BY
Alexander Motylev

SI 14.8 – B90
Alexander Motylev
Aryan Tari
Yerevan 2014 (2)

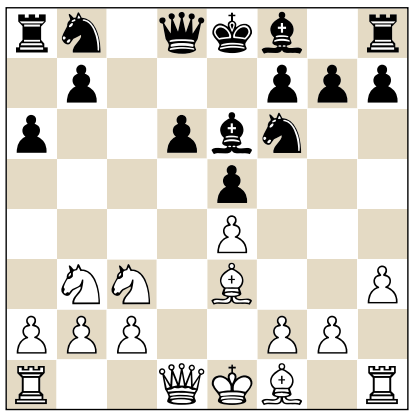
This was one of the key games for me in the European Championship. In such tournaments it often happens that, if from the start you do not quickly achieve a plus score, you can find yourself 'bogged down'. The group from 50% to +2 is often distinguished by its increased solidity.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6

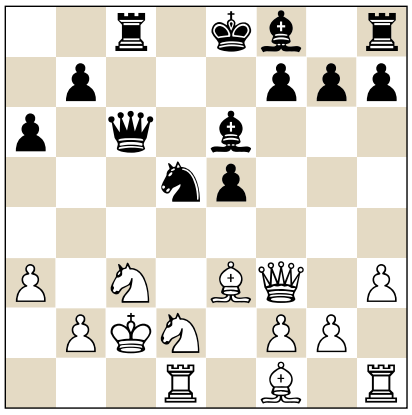


If one believes the opening database, my young opponent did not have any great experience in the Najdorf. Therefore I decided to play one of the sidelines. Unfortunately, I did not take account of the fact that in recent times this variation has become quite popular, so that the attempt to surprise my opponent was a complete failure.

6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e6 8.h3



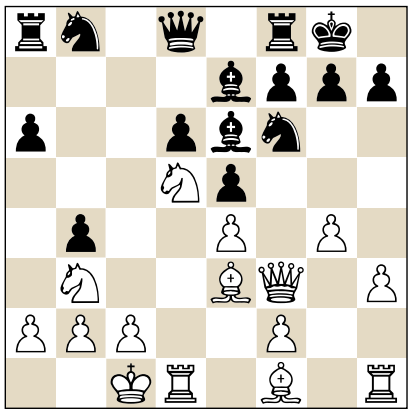
8...♗e7 In Round 8 Laznicka-Wojtaszek took a similar course. Radoslaw played 8...♘c6 9.♕f3 ♖c8 10.0-0-0 ♘b4 11.♔b1 ♕c7 (with the threat of ...d6-d5) 12.a3 and here there unexpectedly followed a piece sacrifice: 12...♘xc2! 13.♔xc2 ♕c6! 14.♘d2 d5! 15.exd5 ♘xd5.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

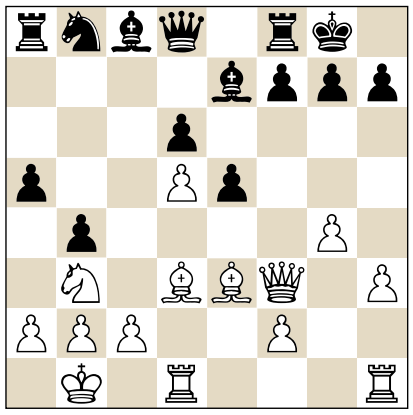
At this point the time on Black's clock was 1.35, and Viktor was sitting with his head in his hands. I was sitting on an adjacent board, and it appeared that the game would conclude in a quick win for Black. But his initiative proved to be sufficient only to maintain the balance: 16.♘b1!? ♕a4+ 17.♔d2 ♕b3 18.♔e1 ♘xe3 19.♕xe3 ♕xb2 20.♕xe5 ♗c5! 21.♖d2! ♕c1+ 22.♖d1 ♕b2 23.♖d2 ♕c1+ 24.♖d1 ♕b2 ½-½.

9.♕f3 0-0 10.0-0-0 b5 11.g4 b4 12.♘d5



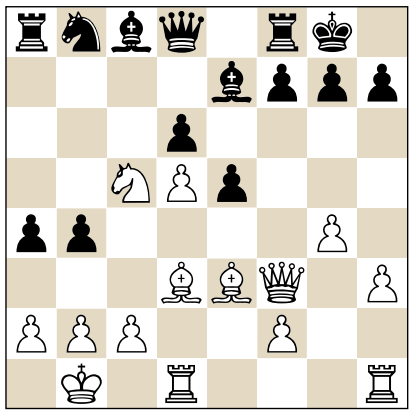
12...♘xd5 13.exd5 ♗c8
We made all these moves quite quickly. During the game I thought that it did not seem natural to capture with the knight on d5 and retreat the bishop to c8, but on returning home I ascertained that during the last two years this set-up has been employed by such masters of the Najdorf as Volokitin, Leko and Wojtaszek.

14.♗d3 a5 15.♔b1



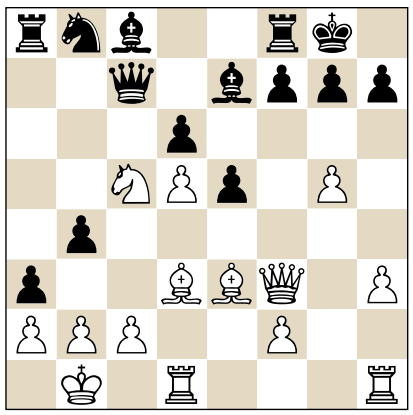
15...a4
In the event of the immediate 15...♗a6!? White could play 16.♘c5!?, and after 16...♗xd3 (16...dxc5?? loses to 17.d6), apart from 17.♖xd3, he could also consider capturing with the knight, followed by f2-f4.

16.♘d2 It would appear that 16.♘c5!? was stronger, temporarily preventing the exchange of bishops:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) If 16...♕c7 White can even play 17.g5!?, with a veiled tactical idea, for example, if 17...a3 he now wins by

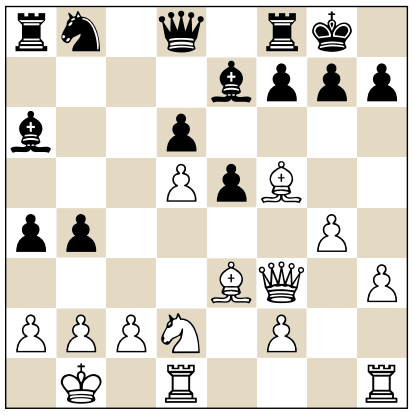


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

18.♘e6!! fxe6 19.♗xh7+! ♔xh7 20.♕h5+ ♔g8 21.g6;
B) 16...♘d7 is dubious because of the loss of the b4-pawn: 17.♘xd7 ♗xd7 18.♕e4 g6 19.♕xb4.

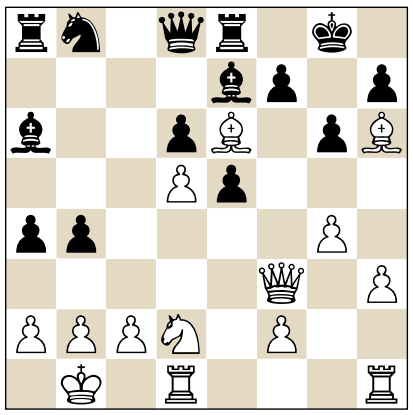
16...♗a6 17.♗f5!?

I did not want to exchange the bishops, and I so devised this interesting regrouping.



17...♘d7!?

Of course, Black does not naively play 17...g6?!, after which there is the rather unpleasant 18.♗h6! ♖e8. Here I though that White was winning quickly with 19.♗e6!,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

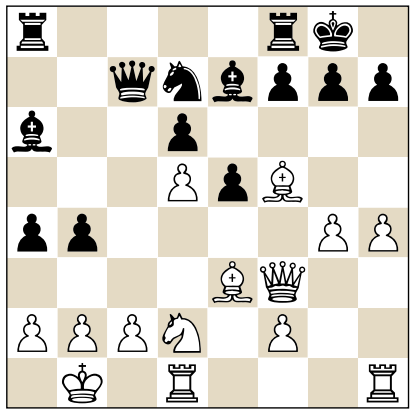
but the computer points out the cool-headed 19...♖f8!!, when there is nothing better than to return with 20.♗f5 (since after 20.♗xf8? ♕xf8 Black also picks up the second bishop) 20...♖e8 and now 21.h4 is interesting – White has the initiative, but the position is far from clear.

18.h4!

White must play resourcefully to avoid ending up in a difficult position. After 18.♘e4 ♕c7 Black is the first to begin an attack.

Aryan Tari (blue shirt) joined the excursion on the free day. The young Norwegian (14) failed to score a second GM norm, but his grandmaster title seems to be only a matter of time.

18...♕c7



19.♗g5!

In the event of 19.♘e4? Black has the very strong 19...b3! 20.axb3 axb3 21.cxb3 ♖fc8.

19...♘c5

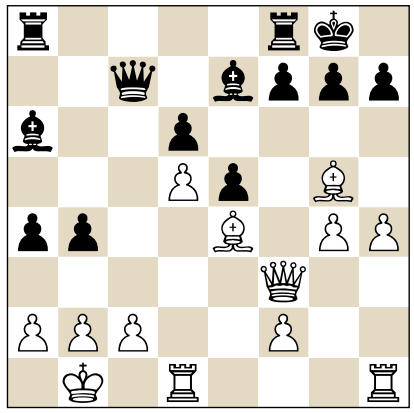
19...♘b6!? was also possible, but after 20.♗xe7 ♕xe7 21.♘e4 I prefer White's position.

20.♘e4!

A necessary exchange.

20...♘xe4 21.♗xe4

During the game I thought that White was better – in particular due to the difference in the placing of the bishops. But the computer does not confirm this assessment. It would appear that thanks to his far-advanced pawns Black has at least sufficient counterplay.



21...♖fb8

I was more concerned about 21...♖fc8, but then, however, White would have retreated his bishop to d2, gaining the necessary time: 22.♗d2 ♖ab8 23.h5, with attack.

22.♗c1

22.♕f5!? g6 23.♕f3 was interesting, but who will get to the opposing king first is hard to predict.

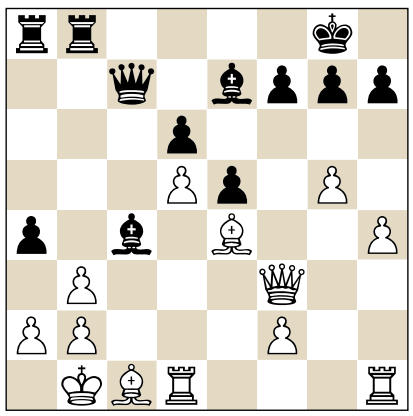
22...♗c4!

Preparing the possible bishop sacrifice on a2, as well as the ...b4-b3 breakthrough.

23.h5

Here I spent quite a long time choos-

ing between h5 and g5. 23.g5 seemed slow to me, while if 23.h5 I was concerned about 23...h6. And it would appear that I guessed wrong. 23.g5 was probably stronger, in some cases threatening g5-g6. Then Black would have to force events and play ...b4-b3 immediately: 23...b3 (23...♗f8 24.g6!) 24.cxb3



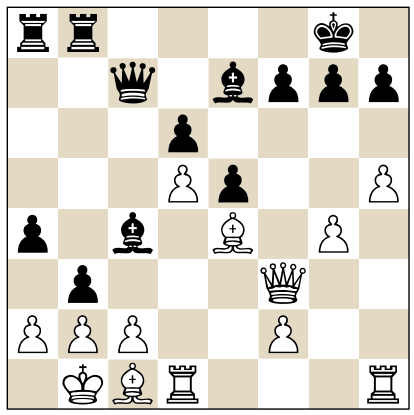
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

24...♗xb3! 25.axb3 axb3 26.♗d2 ♕a7 27.♔c1 ♕a1+ 28.♗b1 ♗d8!? 29.♗c3 ♗a5 30.♗xa5 ♕xa5 31.♖d3 e4 32.♕xe4 ♖e8 33.♕f3 ♖e1+ 34.♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 35.♕d1 ♖c8+ 36.♖c3 ♖xc3+ 37.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 38.♗c2, with equality.

23...♗f8

Aryan also thought for a long time here and decided not to force events for the moment.

Strangely enough, all the same Black could have played 23...b3!:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

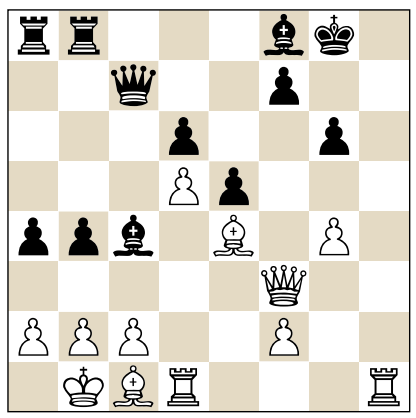
A) In the event of 24.cxb3 Black can now capture on b3 with his rook – 24...♖xb3!, when the rook cannot be taken because of the variation 25.axb3 axb3 26.♗d2 ♕a7 27.♔c1 ♕a1+ 28.♗b1 ♖a2 29.♗c3 ♗g5+ (unexpectedly the weakening of the g5-square tells!), so White has to play 25.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 26.♕xf7 when he may still be able to hold on;

B) I was intending to play 24.♕f5 bxc2+ (24...bxa2+ 25.♔a1 ♔f8 26.♕xh7 ♗f6 27.♖h3!!, winning) 25.♗xc2 ♗f6! and here White has to go onto the defensive with 26.a3, or 26.♖h3, since if 26.g5 Black wins with a fantastic variation: 26...♗xa2+ 27.♔xa2 ♕c4+ 28.♔b1 a3 29.gxf6 ♕a2+!! 30.♔xa2 axb2+, with mate.

24.♕f5

Tempting, but hardly the strongest. Here we each had only about ten minutes left, so there was no time for long calculations. The other possibilities were 24.g5!?, after which 24...b3 25.cxb3 ♖xb3 is necessary, and the completely unexpected (and probably strongest) 24.♗g5! with the threat of 25.♕f5 g6 26.hxg6 hxg6 27.♗f6 ♗g7! 28.♗xg7 ♔xg7 (28...gxf5 29.♗f6) 29.♖h7+ ♔xh7 30.♕f6.

24...g6 25.hxg6 hxg6 26.♕f3



26...b3!

The correct choice! 26...♗xa2+ 27.♔xa2 b3+ 28.♔b1 bxc2+ 29.♗xc2 a3 30.♗b3 was evidently premature.

27.cxb3

In the event of 27.♕h3!? the black king would have very quickly run to the queenside: 27...bxc2+ 28.♗xc2 ♗g7 29.♕h7+ ♔f8 30.♗h6 ♗xh6

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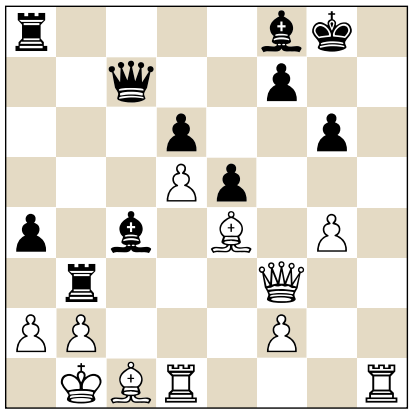
31.♕xh6+ ♔e8 32.♕h8+ ♔d7 33.♕f6 ♔c8 34.♖c1 ♔b7, with an unclear position.

27...♖xb3!!

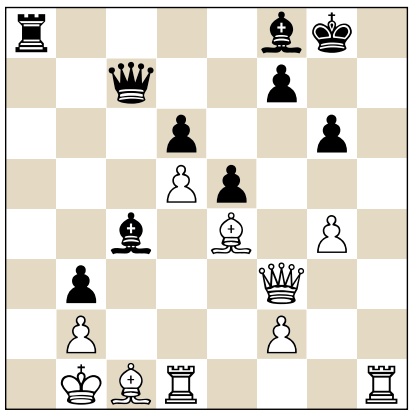
I have to admit that I had underestimated this sacrifice. Here we were both already in time-trouble.



28.axb3!

After 28.♕f6?! ♗g7 29.♕h4 ♖xb2+! 30.♗xb2 a3 White may be able to save the game, but no more.

28...axb3



29.♗d2!

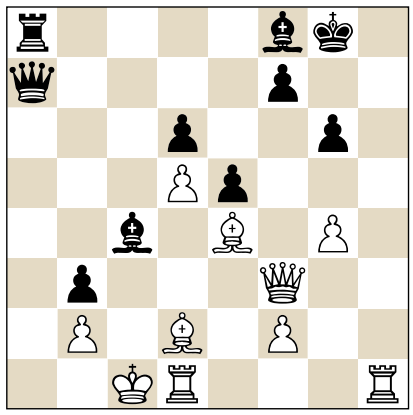
I saw that it was necessary to take control of the a5-square, but I did not realize this was the only move. Moreover, I was convinced that the sacrifice was incorrect. And only on arriving home did I realize that my opponent had played brilliantly and went wrong when only a step away from a draw.

Black wins after 29.♗g5 ♕a5 30.♔c1 ♖c8 31.♕c3 ♗a6.

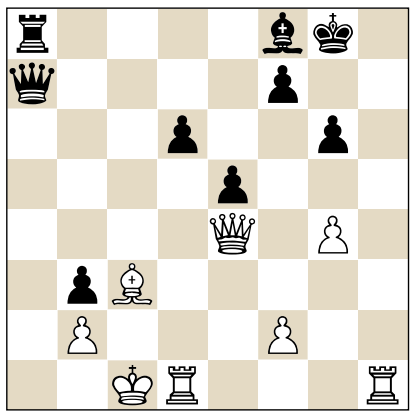
29...♕a7!

It was also possible to transpose moves: 29...♗xd5 30.♗c3 ♕a7 (or 30...♗xe4+ 31.♕xe4 ♕a7).

30.♔c1



30...♕a1+? A painful mistake in severe time-trouble. Black had a problem-like saving possibility: 30...♗xd5! 31.♗c3 ♗xe4 32.♕xe4



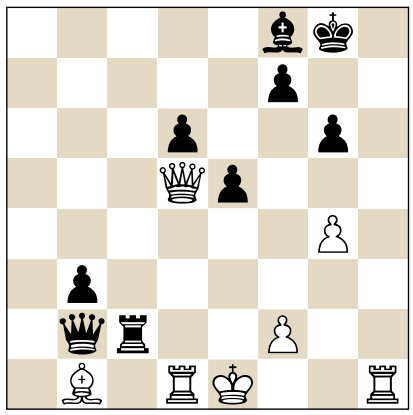
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

32...♕xf2!! 33.♔b1 (33.♕b1?? ♖a1!) 33...♕a7!! 34.♔c1 ♕f2, with a draw.

31.♗b1

But now, by giving back some of the material, White takes his king into safety.

31...♗xd5 32.♕xd5 ♖c8+ 33.♗c3 ♖xc3+ 34.♔d2 ♕xb2+ 35.♔e1 ♖c2! The last chance!



36.♖h2! Unexpectedly, this is virtually the only winning move. The remainder is simple.

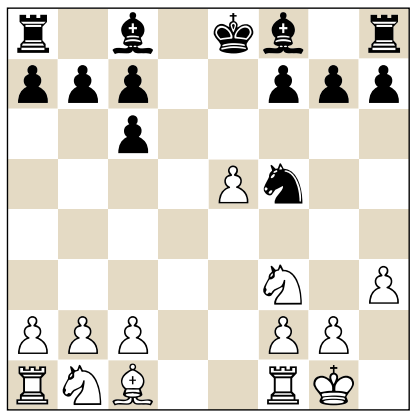
36...♕c3+ 37.♔f1 b2 38.♔g2! ♗e7 39.♗xc2 Black resigned.

NOTES BY
Alexander Motylev

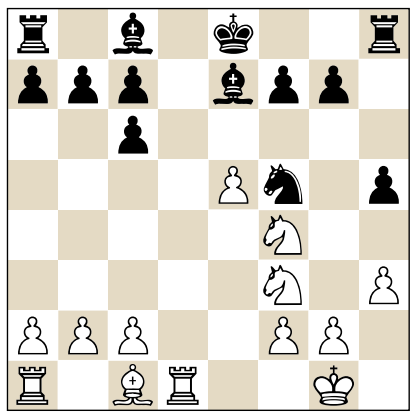
RL 7.4 – C67
Alexander Motylev
Vladislav Kovalev
Yerevan 2014 (4)

For players who open 1. e4 nowadays the Berlin Defence impends like a Sword of Damocles. This makes it all the more pleasant to win a good game against it.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.h3 ♔e8 I was more or less prepared for the Berlin endgame (despite the fact that my opponent had played it only once before), but for some reason I thought that Black would take his king to the queenside and I forgot to look at the variations from the Grischuk game (see below).



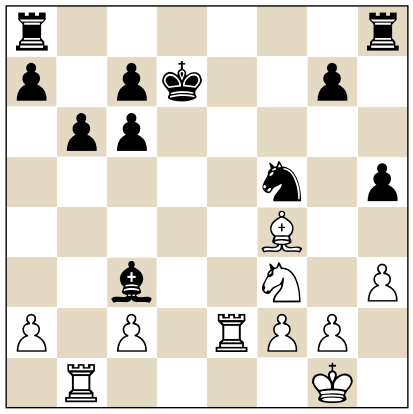
10.♘c3 h5 11.♖d1 ♗e7 12.♘e2 ♗e6 13.♘f4 ♗c8



14.e6!? A fresh idea, which was employed by Alexander Grischuk at the last World Team Championship in

Turkey in a game against Vladimir Akopian. Usually after the emergence of a good idea, new games appear virtually every day, but here for some reason no one had yet repeated this pawn sacrifice, and our game turned out to be the second in this variation. My opponent thought for almost half a hour and played quite an interesting move.

14...♗f6!? Grischuk-Akopian saw 14...♗xe6 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♖e1 ♗f6 17.♗f4 ♗xb2 18.♖ab1 ♗c3 19.♖xe6+ ♔d7 20.♖e2 b6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

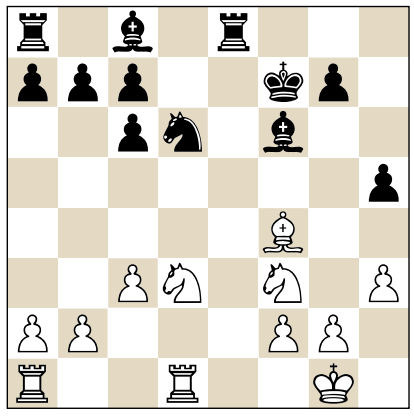
and ended in a draw after a long fight on move 87.

15.exf7+

During the game I thought that after 15.♖e1 we would most probably transpose into the Grischuk game, but for some reason I decided to play differently.

Now I realize that apart from 15...♗xe6 Black can play 15...♘d6, 15...♘d4 and even 15...g5, so that possibly things are not so simple.

15...♔xf7 16.♘d3 ♖e8! 17.♗f4 ♘d6 18.c3



As usual in the Berlin, White has not achieved anything from the opening, but at least I had an extra half hour on the clock.

18...a5!?

An interesting move. 18...♗f5 19.♘c5 ♖ab8 is also possible, but here Black has to think about how to respond to 20.♖e1.

19.♖e1!

I really didn't want to play 19.a4?!, and there was also no great desire to win a pawn but be left with two knights against two bishops after 19.♗xd6?! cxd6 20.♘f4. The most accurate reply for Black would appear to be 20...♖h8! 21.♖xd6 g5 22.♘e2 g4 23.hxg4 hxg4 24.♘e1 ♗e5, when his position is slightly the more pleasant.

19...♖xe1+!? Black pursues his own course. If 19...♗f5 he would have to think what to do after 20.♘de5+ followed by ♘d4. I think that White is slightly better here. It is possible that the immediate 19...a4 was slightly

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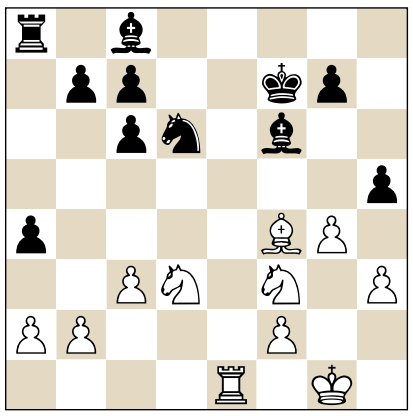
more accurate for Black, when after 20.♖xe8 ♔xe8 21.♖e1+ he can play 21...♔f8!? 22.♗e5 ♖a5! and he can most probably maintain the balance, although after 23.♘f4 White still retains some initiative.

20.♖xe1 a4 White's pawn structure on the queenside is unfavourable, and therefore he has to act energetically. After spending nearly half an hour I managed to find a strong move, creating tension around the black king.

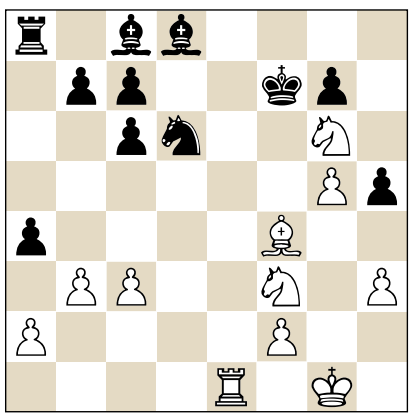
21.g4!



21...hxg4

21...a3 deserved consideration: 22.♘fe5+ (22.g5 is bad because of 22...♗f5, but 22.♘de5+ ♔g8 23.b3 is also possible) 22...♔f8 23.b3, when in my view White is slightly better.

The immediate 21...♘c4? is dubious in view of 22.g5! (the g4-square is under control) 22...♗d8, and here even 23.b3!? ♘d6 24.♘de5+, when the jumps of the white knights are very pretty in the variation 24...♔f8 25.♘g6+ ♔f7



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

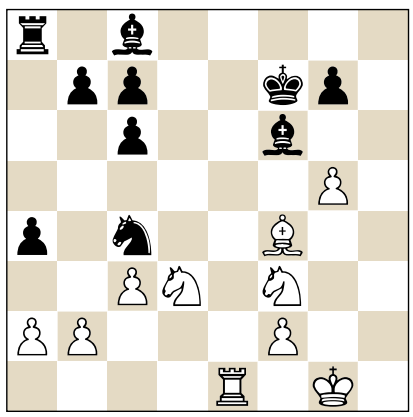
26.♘fh4!! ♗xh3 27.♗xd6 cxd6 28.♘h8+! ♔f8 29.♘4g6+ ♔g8 30.♖e8+ ♔h7 31.♘f8+!! ♔g8 (31...♔xh8 32.g6!, with unavoidable mate) 32.♘e6+ ♔h7 33.g6+ ♔h6 34.♘xd8 and wins.

On behalf of the organizing committee Armenian grandmaster Smbat Lputian handed Alexander Motylev the € 20,000 winner's cheque.

22.hxg4 ♘c4

22...♔g8! was stronger: 23.g5 ♗f5! 24.gxf6 ♗xd3 25.fxg7 ♔xg7 26.♖e7+ ♔f6 27.♖xc7, when it is doubtful whether White can convert his extra pawn.

23.g5

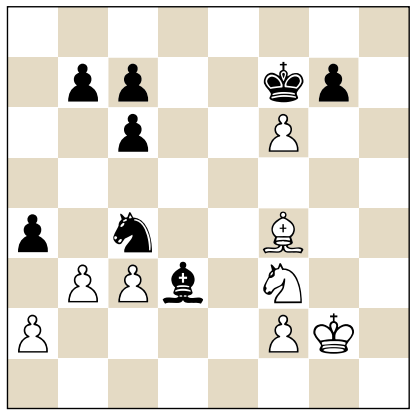


23...♗g4! In the event of 23...♗d8 White is better after the simple 24.♔g2, while after 23...♗f5 he gains an advantage with 24.gxf6 ♗xd3 25.b3 ♘b2 26.fxg7.

24.♔g2! If White is careless he can find himself threatened with mate after 24.gxf6 ♗xf3 25.b3 (25.fxg7 ♔xg7 is equal) 25...♖h8!. Fortunately there is a defence – 26.♗h2, but after 26...♖d8! Black is now slightly better.

24...♖d8! 25.♘c5!

Initially I thought that White was winning here after 25.♖d1 ♗f5 26.gxf6 ♖xd3 27.♖xd3 ♗xd3 28.b3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and it was only after some time that I noticed that Black can play the immediate 28...♘b2!. White has to play 29.fxg7 (29.♗c1 a3) 29...♔xg7 30.♘d2, but it is clear that he cannot win this position. This variation came as a great disappointment to me. I had to spend some time in order to satisfy myself that White really had nothing, and to switch to the move 25.♘c5. As

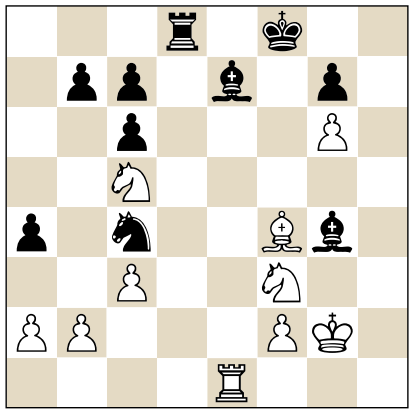
a result, out of 40 minutes I only had 10 left. Terrible time management! But at least I made the correct choice, retaining significantly more practical winning chances.

25...♗e7?

In my calculations I was very concerned about 25...a3!?, but then I realized that White has the simple 26.bxa3! (but not 26.b3? ♗xc3 27.♖c1 ♗xf3+ 28.♔xf3 ♘e5+, and not 26.gxf6 axb2 27.fxg7 ♗f5, with compensation) 26...♗xc3 27.♖c1 ♗xf3+ 28.♔xf3 ♘e5+ and here, at the least, 29.♗xe5 ♗xe5 30.♘xb7, with a slight advantage for White.

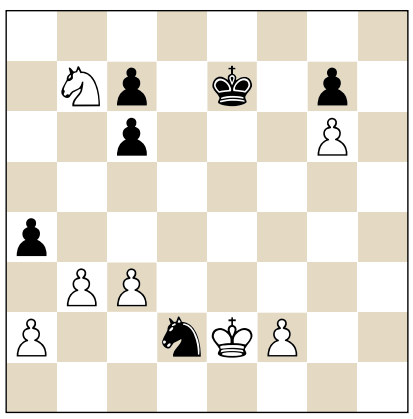
It was essential to play 25...♖d5! 26.gxf6 ♗xf3+ 27.♔xf3 ♖xc5 28.fxg7 ♔xg7 29.b3 axb3 30.axb3 ♘d6 31.c4. White is slightly better, of course, but Black should be able to defend this endgame.

26.g6+! ♔f8



27.♘xb7!?

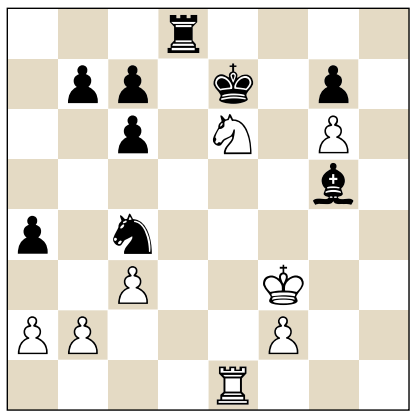
In my preliminary calculations I studied the endgame arising after 27.♖xe7 ♔xe7 28.♗g5+ ♔e8 29.♗xd8 ♔xd8, but I decided not to go into it, and this was correct: 30.♘xb7+ ♔e7 31.b3 ♗xf3+ 32.♔xf3 ♘d2+ 33.♔e2



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

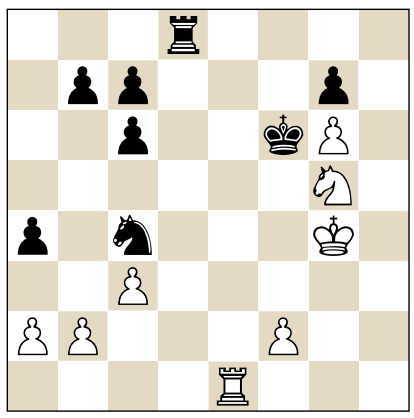
33...axb3 (33...♘xb3? 34.♔d1!!, and wins) 34.axb3 ♘xb3 35.♔d3 c5! and Black holds on.

27.♗g5! was a good alternative, but I overlooked the pretty move 31.♔g4!! at the end of the variation 27...♗xf3+ 28.♔xf3 ♗xg5 29.♘e6+ ♔e7,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

when White has the fantastic resource 30.♘xg5+! ♔f6 31.♔g4!!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

winning after 31...♖d6 32.♘e4+, 31...♘e5+ 32.♖xe5 or 31...♔xg6 32.♖e6 mate.

But also after the move in the game, because of the dangerous position of the black king, White is better everywhere.

27...♖d3

Here we both had less than five minutes left. Black had a difficult choice.

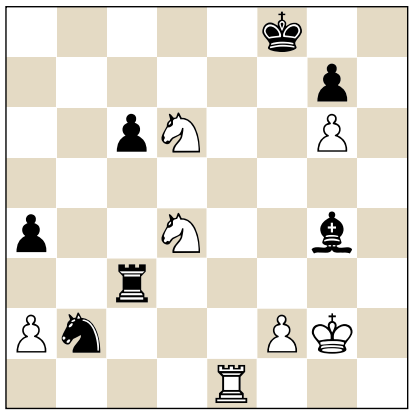
27...♖d5 was possibly stronger, although even here White has a decent advantage after 28.b3 axb3 29.axb3 ♖f5 30.♖e4 ♘d6 31.♘xd6 cxd6 32.♘h4 ♖d5 33.♗xd6 ♖xd6 34.♖xg4 ♗xh4 35.♖xh4 ♖xg6+ 36.♔f3.

28.♘d4 ♘xb2

A human move. The computer suggests as best 28...♗h3+ 29.♔h2 ♗c8 30.♘e6+! ♗xe6 31.♖xe6 ♖f3 32.♗g3 ♖f6 33.♖e4 ♘d6 34.♘xd6 ♗xd6 35.f4, with a difficult endgame for Black.

29.♗xc7! White's pieces gradually steal up on the black king.

29...♖xc3 30.♗d6! ♗xd6 31.♘xd6

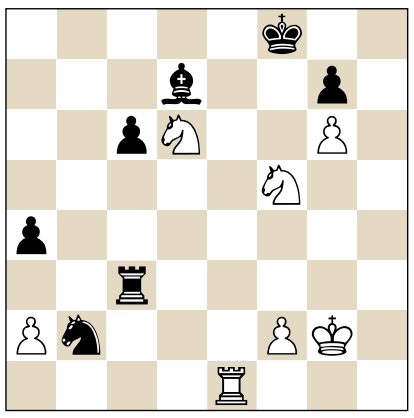


31...♗d7 During the game I was concerned about the intermediate check 31...♗h3+ 32.♔h2 ♗d7, blocking the h-file. But Houdini points out an attractive win: 33.♘e6+! ♔e7 34.♘c5+! ♔d8 (34...♔xd6 35.♘e4+) 35.♘db7+ ♔c8 36.♖e7.

32.♘4f5!

Playing for mate! This net can no longer be severed.

By analogy with the previous variation, 32.♘e6+ ♔e7 33.♘c5+ would also have won.



32...♘c4

White also wins after 32...♖c5 33.♖e7 ♖xf5 34.♘xf5 ♗xf5 35.♖f7+, or 32...♘d3 33.♖e7 ♘f4+ 34.♔h2 ♖h3+ 35.♔g1.

33.♖h1! ♗e6

33...♔g8 is met by 34.♘f7.

34.♖h8+ ♗g8 35.♘e4

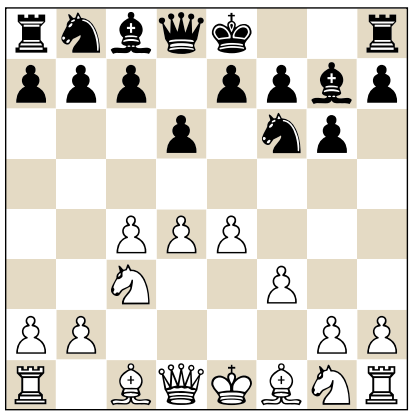
Black resigned.

An interesting and very tactically-rich game.

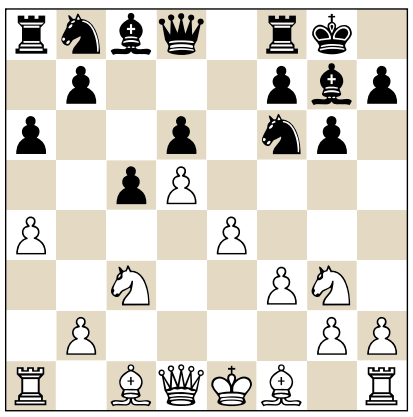
NOTES BY
David Anton

KI 52.9 – A65
Etienne Bacrot
David Anton
Yerevan 2014 (10)

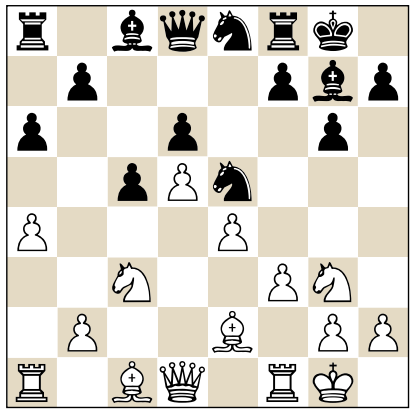
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7
My loss against Smirin with white in a King's Indian the day before inspired me to play it in this game.
4.e4 d6 5.f3
A surprise! Bacrot only plays the set-up with ♘f3 and ♗e2, and in my database I have no game with this move.



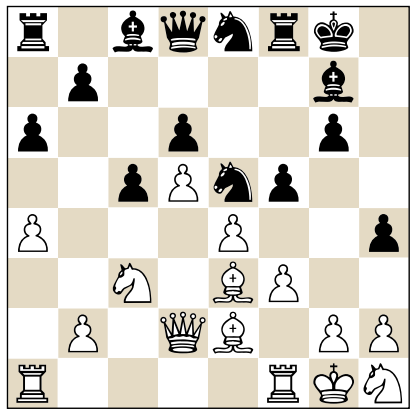
5...0-0 6.♘ge2
As I don't often play the King's Indian, I didn't know this line well, but I remembered a move that I had looked at with my trainer more than a year ago.
6...c5 7.d5 e6 8.♘g3 exd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.a4



10...♘e8!? This is the move. I only remembered one line: 11.♗e2 h5 12.0-0?! ♗d4+ 13.♔h1?? h4, and Black is winning. I thought I might win in this way, but Bacrot made things more difficult for me.
11.♗d3 Here I had some fun considering 11...♗h8 and putting all my pieces on the eighth rank, but instead I decided that it was better to develop my pieces in the centre.
11...♘d7 12.0-0 ♘e5 13.♗e2 This bishop is very important, as we will see in the game, and it is necessary to keep it.

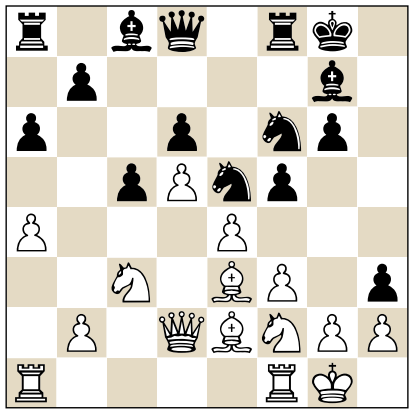


13...h5 The thematic move in this kind of position.
14.♗e3 h4 15.♘h1 f5 The threat was 16.f4. **16.♕d2**



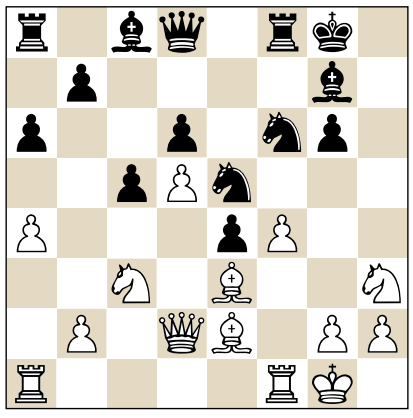
16...♘f6
I considered 16...♔h7, with the idea of meeting 17.♘f2 with 17...f4, winning, as after 18.♗xf4 ♖xf4! 19.♕xf4 ♗h6 the queen is trapped. But I trusted that Bacrot had seen this.
17.♘f2 h3

Runner-up David Anton was the revelation of the European Championship. The 18-year-old student of mathematics is Spain's chess hope for the future.



18.♘xh3?! More normal seemed 18.g3, with a complicated position.

18...fxe4 19.f4

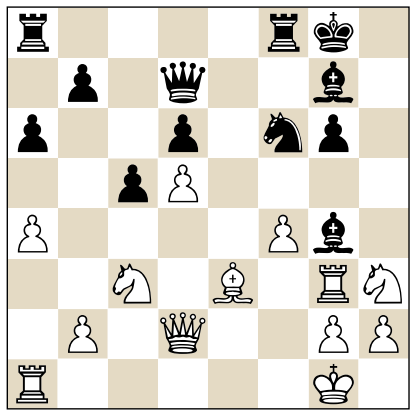


19...♘f3+! 20.♗xf3

Interesting was 20.gxf3 ♗xh3 21.fxe4 ♗xf1 22.♖xf1, but after 22...♕e7 I believe that Black is slightly better.

20...exf3 21.♖xf3 ♗g4 22.♖g3 ♕d7

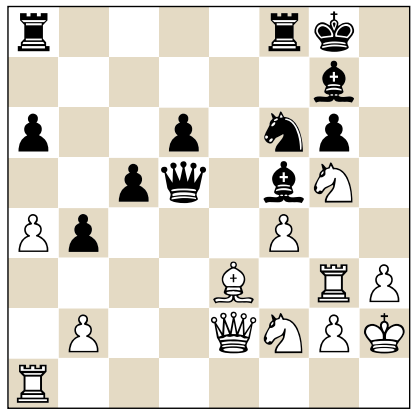
In exchange for a pawn the white pieces have ended up in worse positions. In addition, Black's light-squared bishop has no counterpart.



23.♘g5 b5!

After the knight is removed from c3 the pawn on d5 will become very weak.

24.h3 ♗f5 25.♔h2 b4 26.♘d1 ♕b7 27.♘f2 ♕xd5 28.♕e2



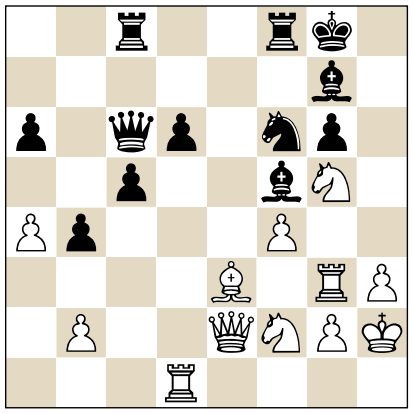
The key moment in the game. The threat is ♖d1, followed by ♕c4.

28...♕c6 29.♕c4+ ♕d5 30.♕e2

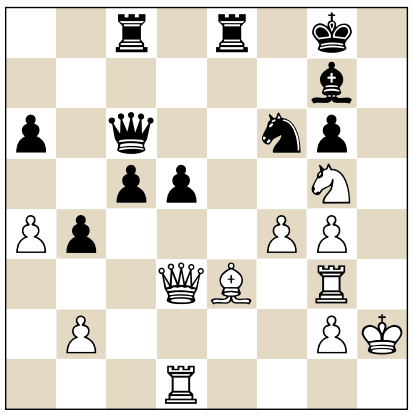
With this interlude I gained a couple of minutes.

30...♖ac8! 31.♖d1 ♕c6

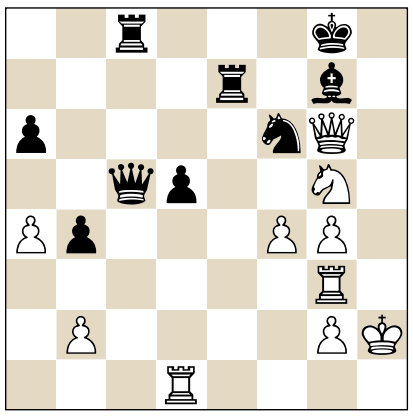
Now the idea of 30... ♖ac8! becomes clear. On 32.♕c4+ Black replies 32...d5, and the pawn on c5 is defended.



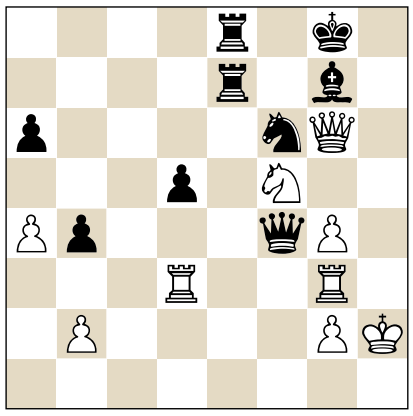
32.♘g4 Threatening 33.♘xf6+ and 34.♕c4+. **32...♗xg4 33.hxg4 ♖fe8 34.♕d3 d5**



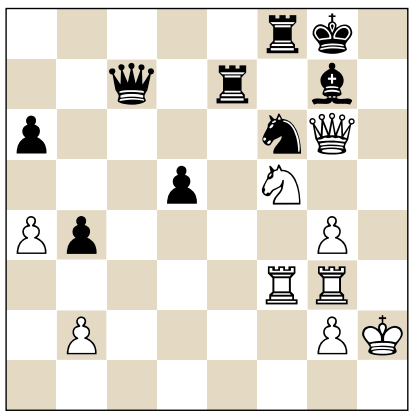
35.♗xc5 35.♕xg6 was not possible because of 35...♘xg4+. The mass of black pawns is very strong and Bacrot tries a last practical resource.
35...♕xc5 36.♕xg6 ♖e7
It looks as if the white attack has faltered, but...



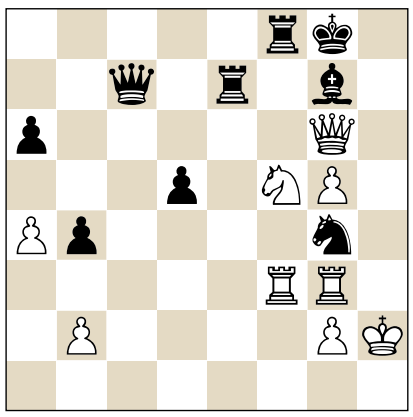
37.♘f3! The knight is on its way to f5 and clears the way for the g-pawn.
37...♕d6 Better was 37...♕c2, intending to meet 38.♖d3 with 38...♕b1, but it's not easy to move the queen to the other end of the board when you are under attack...
38.♘h4 ♕xf4 39.♘f5 ♖ce8 40.♖d3



40...♕c7 The last move before the time-control. Better was 40...♕e5, but fortunately, after the text I had the advantage and 30 minutes to think.
41.♖f3 Threatening ♘xe7 and ♖xf6.
41...♖f8! The only move to keep the advantage. With time to think everything is much easier.

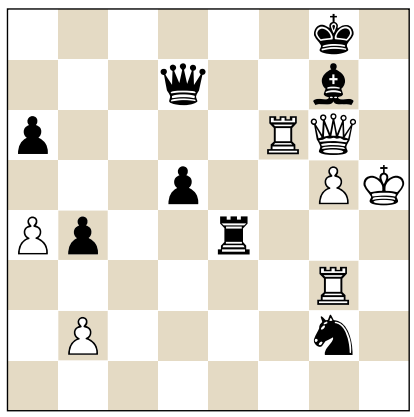


42.g5 Bacrot spent 24 of his remaining 25 minutes before he made this move. The position looks winning for Black, but according to the machine, after 42.♘xe7+, followed by g5, there was still everything to play for.
42...♘g4+!
With 22 minutes left it was easy to see the winning sequence.



43.♔h3 ♖xf5 44.♖xf5 ♘e3

45.♖f2 ♕d7+ 46.♔h4 ♖e6 47.♖f6 ♖e4+ 48.♔h5 ♘xg2



The threat of ...♖h4 mate cannot be parried, as 49.♖xg2 runs into 49...♕h3+, so Bacrot decided to resign. ■

Yerevan 2014

					TPR
1	Alexander Motylev	RUS	2656	9	2872
2	David Anton	ESP	2559	8	2775
3	Vladimir Fedoseev	RUS	2641	8	2790
4	Dragan Solak	TUR	2610	8	2774
5	Pavel Eljanov	UKR	2723	8	2790
6	Constantin Lupulescu	ROU	2643	8	2759
7	David Navara	CZE	2700	8	2763
8	Ivan Saric	CRO	2661	8	2695
9	Igor Lysyj	RUS	2655	8	2699
10	Hrant Melkumyan	ARM	2613	7½	2751
11	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	POL	2713	7½	2742
12	Dmitry Jakovenko	RUS	2723	7½	2740
13	Vladislav Artemiev	RUS	2621	7½	2712
14	Ilya Smirin	ISR	2644	7½	2723
15	Laurent Fressinet	FRA	2709	7½	2729
16	Gabriel Sargissian	ARM	2676	7½	2721
17	Alexander Areshchenko	UKR	2705	7½	2718
18	Milos Perunovic	SRB	2617	7½	2706
19	Ivan Cheparinov	BUL	2681	7½	2713
20	Viorel Iordachescu	MDA	2583	7½	2696
21	Sergei Zhigalko	BLR	2671	7½	2694
22	Samvel Ter-Sahakyan	ARM	2572	7½	2656
23	Csaba Balogh	HUN	2651	7½	2656
24	Grigoriy Oparin	RUS	2526	7½	2610
25	Evgeny Najer	RUS	2633	7	2729
26	Arman Pashikian	ARM	2612	7	2699
27	Sergey Grigoriants	RUS	2574	7	2679
28	Yury Kryvoruchko	UKR	2706	7	2694
29	Viktor Laznicka	CZE	2681	7	2686
30	Alexander Riazantsev	RUS	2689	7	2685
31	Alexander Moiseenko	UKR	2712	7	2672
32	Benjamin Bok	NED	2575	7	2640
33	Ivan Popov	RUS	2650	7	2654

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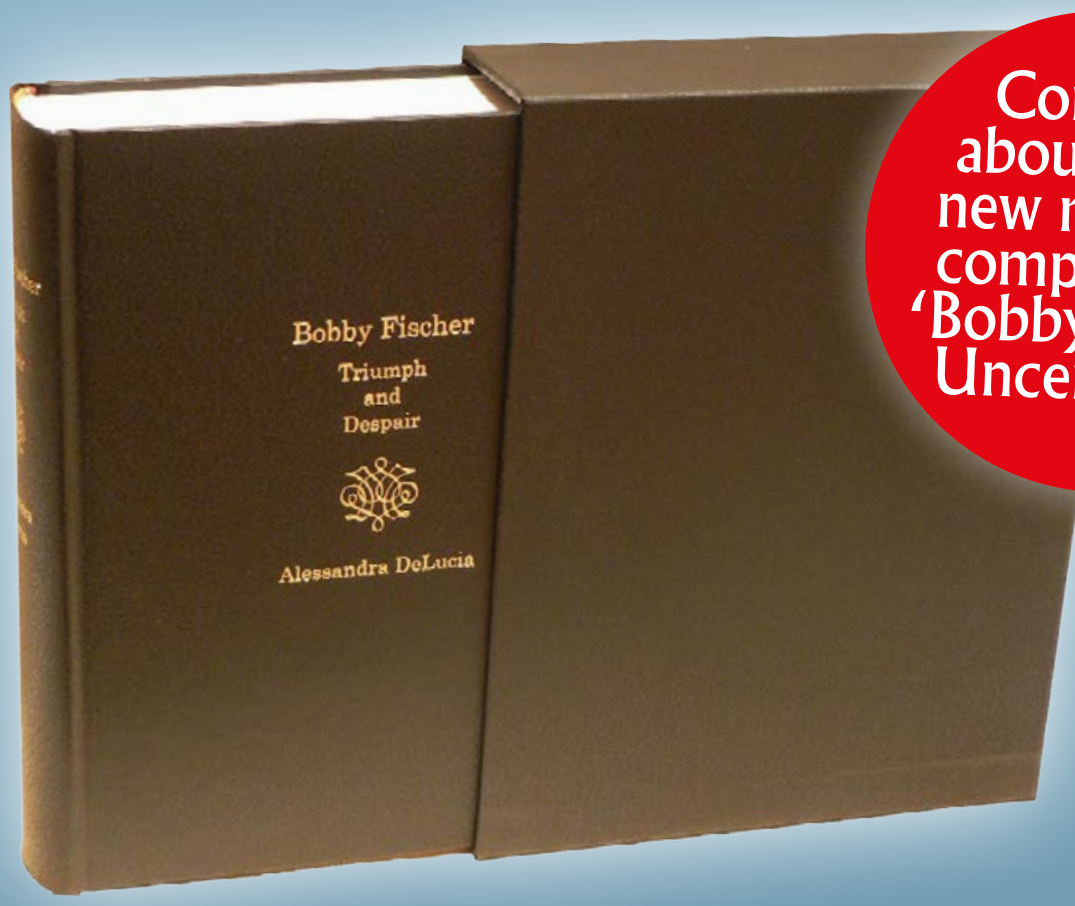

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Alex Yermolinsky: 'Vishy is finished and done for; stick a fork into him.'
(In his pre-Candidates assessment 'Out On A Limb' for the ICC)

Garry Kasparov: 'As a retiree, always good to see the oldest player in the field doing well! Those who said Anand should retire should be embarrassed.' *(On Twitter)*

Magnus Carlsen: 'The game starts at 10 every day, so I'm almost interested enough to get up at 10.'
(On being asked by NewsinEnglish.no, if he was following the games from the Candidates Tournament)

Daniel Tammet: 'Fischer, the great American chess champion, famously said, "Chess is life." I would say, "Pi is life."'

Dave Barry: 'My problem with chess was that all my pieces wanted to end the game as soon as possible.'

Terry Pratchett: 'Most gods throw dice, but Fate plays chess, and you don't find out till too late that he's been playing with two queens all along'.
(Opening lines to his book Interesting Times)

Ian Rogers: 'Two passed pawns on the sixth beat everything, up to a royal flush.'

Mikhail Tal: 'I'll be on the side of vodka!'
(Commenting on the Kremlin launching a campaign against alcoholism in the Soviet Union)

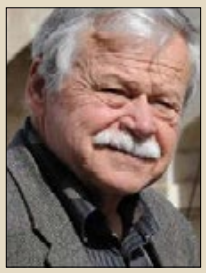
Sergey Shipov: 'The most significant phenomenon of the last few years has been the Berlin Variation, putting an end to nothing less than the move 1.e4.'

Jonathan Rowson: 'When I was playing professionally, I often lived a bit like a monk during events … For me, that meant no dessert, no alcohol, twice-daily meditation, diligent preparation, and no television.'

Sergey Karjakin: 'If I don't return to my homeland, perhaps my homeland will return to me?'
(On Twitter on the Ukraine-Russia dispute over Crimea)

Leon Poliakoff: 'Before Professor Elo stamped numbers on our foreheads, people played to win tournaments or place as high as they could in the standings or simply win as many games as they could. Forget ratings. Play to win and let others figure out how good you are.'

Bent Larsen: 'A chess player never has a heart attack in a good position.'



Vlastimil Hort: 'I believe that chess possesses a magic that is also a help in advanced age. A rheumatic knee is forgotten during a game of chess and other events can seem quite unimportant in comparison with a catastrophe on the chessboard.'

Tim Krabbé: 'When I imagine Troitzky in his Siberian forest, surrounded by howling wolves, analysing night after night if king plus four knights can always beat king plus queen, that to me is great. That is what chess is all about; only you have to be a chess player to appreciate it. How can you explain to a non-chess player that within chess there is a little world of endgame studies within which you have a tinier world of theoretical major minor endgames, within which there is a microcosmos populated by madmen analysing four knights against a queen?'

Andre Agassi: 'Decisions, especially bad ones, create their own momentum, and momentum, as every athlete knows, is a bitch to stop.'
(In Open, An Autobiography)

Woody Allen: 'I failed to make the chess team because of my height.'

Matt Kirshen: 'I was playing chess with my friend and he said, "Let's make this interesting." So we stopped playing chess.'
(Voted one of the top 10 jokes heard during the 2011 Edinburgh Fringe Festival)

Stuart Conquest: 'A strange thought: when I was young I must have played chess with people born in the 19th century!' *(On Twitter)*

Hikaru Nakamura: 'Fischer would almost certainly lose to all of us, but this is due to the fact that the game has so fundamentally changed. If Fischer had a few years to use computers, I think he would probably be on the same level.'
(In an interview on entertainment website Reddit)

A happy Li Chao and his girlfriend at the prize-giving.

Li Chao has a party at Reykjavik Open Jubilee

Last year, a large contingent of Chinese players flocked to the Reykjavik Open, but none of them managed to claim the top honours. For the 50th-anniversary edition only one Chinese player turned up, but that didn't stop second seed Li Chao from claiming clear first with the fine score of 8½ out of 10. Four players finished half a point behind the winner. One of them was our reporter, **Helgi Olafsson**, who had not taken part since 2004, when he was involved in the organization of a prestigious rapid event alongside the Open that saw the historic clash between Magnus Carlsen and Garry Kasparov. This time, the 13th World Champion was a guest-of-honour in the Icelandic capital and did not miss the opportunity to visit Bobby Fischer's grave.

This year there were exactly 100 Icelandic participants in the 50th Reykjavik Open, while the remaining 155 entries comprised another 34 nationalities. The largest number, 28, came from Norway, the home of the current World Champion. Magnus has played in Reykjavik twice, but this time the Carlsen family was represented by his father Henrik. At the closing ceremony he was gifted a painted portrait of his son that had appeared on the cover of the World Championship issue of the Icelandic magazine *Skak*. Henrik expressed his thanks for the gift with a witty speech, saying that he was aware that during his visits Magnus had taken points from various people present, but that on behalf of the family he could reassure them that this year he had given most of those points back.

I had not taken part in the Reykjavik Open since 2004. That year, the rapid event with Kasparov and Carlsen left me no time to play myself, and in the years that followed I mostly preferred to watch the Icelandic talents that I work with as a trainer for the federation. But on the occasion of this special jubilee I let myself be persuaded to play again. I didn't know what to expect and my performance came as kind of a surprise for me.

In Round 8, I beat Walter Browne in a far from flawless game. It was my first win against him ever. Before this encounter the score had been 3½-½ in his favour. The game from our last meeting at the New York Open in 1984 found its way into the pages of *The New York Times*.

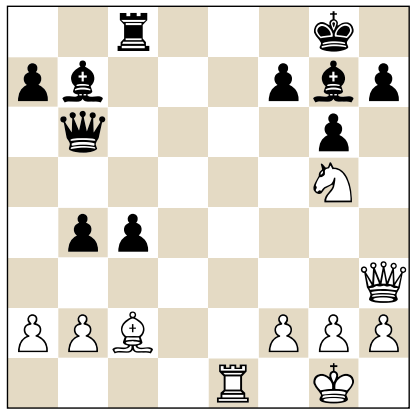
For many younger readers Walter Browne may be fairly unknown, but he was US Champion six times, won the National Open an amazing 11 times, and was the sole winner of one the best round-robins that our country has ever seen, the 1978 Reykjavik International. There, Browne finished ahead of other foreign participants like Bent Larsen, Lev Polugaevsky, Vlastimil Hort, Tony Miles, Jan Smejkal and William Lombardy. Walter had many dubious positions, but overcame all his problems. Before the start of event, the organizers, the Icelandic Chess Federation led by president and vice president Einar S. Einarsson and Högni Torfason, had accepted Fridrik Olafsson's proposal of a new time limit: 90 minutes for 30 moves, followed by an hour for the next 20. After 50 moves the players could adjourn their games. This led to many time-scrambles. I still remember playing my first-round game, while occasionally observing Walter Browne playing Lev Polugaevsky. As White, Browne had nothing to show for his trouble in the Meran Variation against a well-prepared Polu. He gradually slipped into desperate time-trouble and a lost position. I still vividly see how, at one point in the time-scramble, both players kind of jumped off their seats. Browne, an extremely resourceful fellow, found an amazing resource, turned the tables and won!

'I still vividly see how, at one point in the time-scramble, both players kind of jumped off their seats.'

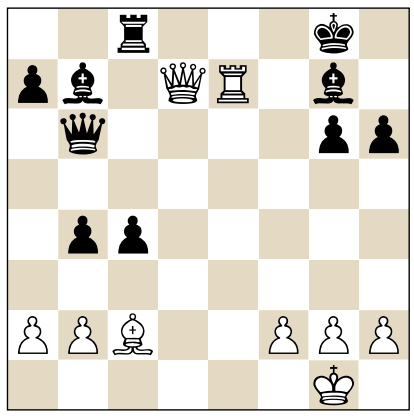
Let me briefly show you this game.

SL 9.1 – D47
Walter Browne
Lev Polugaevsky
Reykjavik 1978

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 c6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗b3 b4 9.♘e2 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♘f4 0-0 12.♖e1 c5 13.d5 exd5 14.♘xd5 ♖c8 15.e4 c4 16.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17.♗g5 ♕g6 18.♗c2 ♖fe8 19.♗f4 ♗xf4 20.♕xd7 ♕b6 21.♕f5 ♗h6 22.e5 g6 23.♕h3 ♗g7 24.e6 ♖xe6 25.♘g5 ♖xe1+ 26.♖xe1



26...h6?
26...♕a5! wins because of the dual threat 27...♕xg5 and 27...b3. 26...h5 is also very good and should win as well.
27.♘xf7! ♔xf7 28.♕d7+ ♔g8 29.♖e7



29...♕d4??
There is an old saying that a piece does not guard the square where it is positioned. Helpful advice, isn't it? Not always! Polu did not trust the best move 29...♗xb2 because of 30.♖e6, but after 30...♕c7! 31.♖xg6+ ♔f8 Black is winning.
30.♕e6+ ♔h8 31.♕xg6 ♗e4 32.♖xe4
And Polugaevsky resigned with a very red face.

In his report on the event in the weekly '64', Polu complained heavily about this game, blaming this loss solely on the new time-control.

So, 36 years on we had former U.S. champ Walter Browne back (for the historians among you I may add that I know that he actually also played

in the 1986, 1988 and 1990 Opens. All this and more is documented in the book I am currently writing on the 50-year history of the Reykjavik Open. For a short preview see pages 78-79). Browne was the only one of the old winners from the Reykjavik International to play in the anniversary tournament.

When I met Walter in Harpa, the splendid concert building close to the harbour that again served as a perfect venue, I praised him for his collection of games published two years ago, *The Stress of Chess... and its Infinite Finesse*. Great games that show that he always lived up to his motto and the battle cry he proposed in the book: 'By competing you are a winner – no matter the result.'

I can only agree with Danny Kopec, who wrote the preface to the book, that Walter Browne had deserved a better tournament structure when he was competing professionally in the US in his prime. Isn't it time for a real professional tour in that great country?

NEW IN CHESS

Animated and energetic as always, Walter Browne brings up a key moment of the game he has just lost. Helgi Olafsson, his usual self, stoically listens to his opponent's suggestion.

RL 12.3 – C77
Walter Browne
Helgi Olafsson
Reykjavik 2014 (8)

1.e4 'My courageous return to 1.e4,' Browne wrote in *The Stress of Chess*. It happened in 2004. As an old subscriber to *Chess Life* I could recall when 1. d4 became his main weapon: at the Manila Interzonal in 1976!

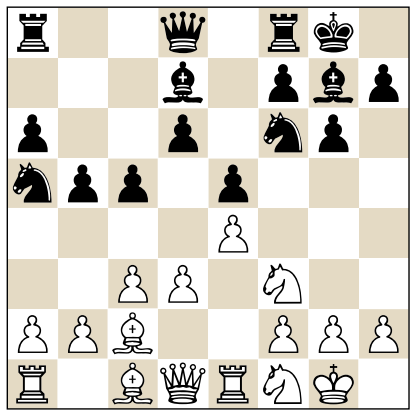
1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6

The Ruy Lopez seemed to be the right choice for this occasion.

5.d3

Browne dedicated his book to the two players that inspired him the most, Bobby Fischer and Mikhail Tal. 5.d3 was played by Bobby against Smyslov in the Havana tournament of 1965. Today the move is a frequent guest at top level again.

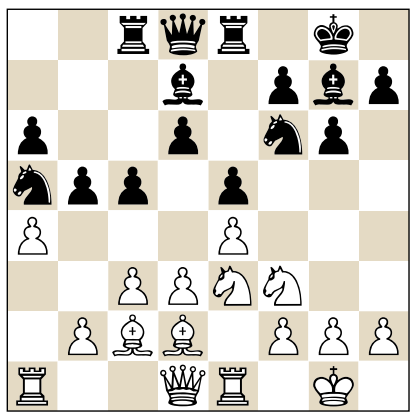
5...d6 6.c3 g6 7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♘bd2 ♗d7 10.♘f1 b5 11.♗b3 ♘a5 12.♗c2 c5



13.♘e3?!

Not the right spot for the knight in this position. It weakens the e4-pawn.

13...♖e8 14.♗d2 ♖c8 15.a4

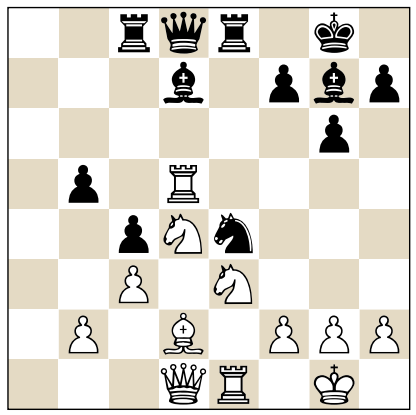


15...c4! The knight on a5 is supposed to go to c6 in the Ruy, but surprisingly, it manages to support this advance. Black is already better.

16.axb5 axb5 17.d4 ♘b3!

Browne thought for a very long time here. He knew he had lost the thread of the game.

18.♖a6 exd4 19.♘xd4 ♘c5 20.♖xd6 ♘fxe4 21.♗xe4 ♘xe4 22.♖d5



22...♘c5?! This move is an attempt to throw away all the benefits of a good opening. But somehow I man-

aged to keep a 'poker face' and play on like this was a perfectly logical pawn sacrifice. After the game someone overheard Browne explaining that I was a gambler! The correct move was my first intention: 22...♘f6 23.♖d6 ♕c7 24.♖a6. White has been driven back and Black is much better after, say, 24...♕b7.

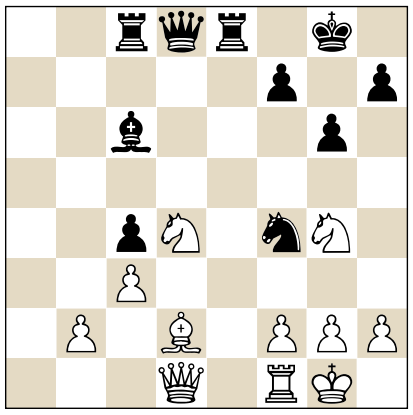
23.♘xb5! You should not offer Browne any pawns. He will take them!

23...♘d3 24.♖f1 24.♘d6 was probably better, but Browne was very short of time and to calculate 24...♗c6 was tough, and he probably hadn't seen 25.♖xd3, when he is more than OK.

24...♘f4! Black is better again and Browne has to shed an exchange.

25.♖d4 ♗xd4 26.♘xd4 ♗c6
Safer was 26...♕b6.

27.♘g4!
This strong move he played quickly. Black all of a sudden has to start worrying about the black squares.

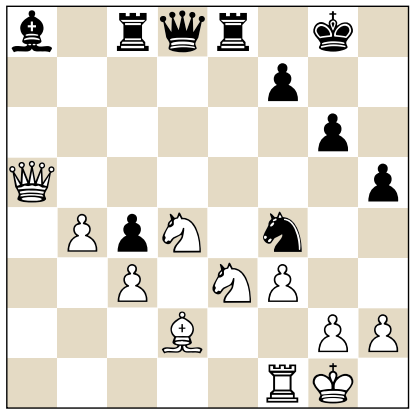


27...♘d3?
Bad. We had both overlooked that White can now play 28.♘xc6 ♖xc6 29.♕f3!, and there is nothing better than to give back the exchange with 29...♕c7, with approximate equality because of the strong knight on d3.
Best was 27...♕d6, keeping the pressure.

28.b4?! h5? 29.♘e3?
He could play 29.♘xc6 ♖xc6 30.♕f3 under slightly improved conditions.

29...♗e4 I had seen 29...♘xb4, which is a much better move. Why I didn't play it is hard for me to explain.

30.f3 ♗a8 31.♕a1 ♘f4 32.♕a5?
Browne had faith in the blockade of his knights but he had overlooked my next move. Best is 32.♘ec2, hitting the f4-knight.



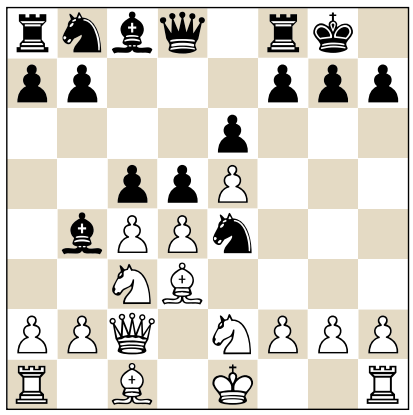
32...♘e2+! 33.♔f2 ♘xd4 34.cxd4 ♕h4+ 35.g3 ♕xh2+ 36.♘g2 ♖e2+ 37.♔xe2 ♕xg2+ 38.♖f2 ♗xf3+
Browne resigned. There were flocks of spectators around the table during the final stage.

Browne scored 7 out of 10, six wins, two losses and two draws. The game he preferred to annotate was one of his draws.

NOTES BY
Walter Browne

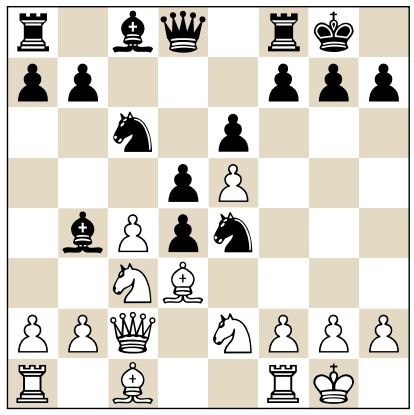
NI 24.13 – E32
Grzegorz Gajewski
Walter Browne
Reykjavik 2014 (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.e4 d5 6.e5 ♘e4 7.♗d3 c5 8.♘e2



8...♘c6 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘d7 10.♗f4 ♕h4 is currently popular. However, I decided to stick to the main lines.

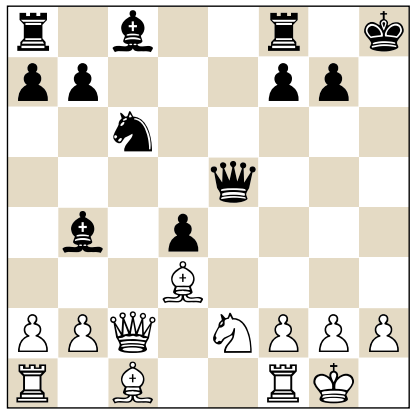
9.0-0 cxd4
The dubious 9...♘xd4 10.♘xd4 cxd4 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♗xe4 h6 13.♕d3 leads to dangerous attacking chances for White, because Black's counterplay is too slow.



10.cxd5
I was naively hoping for 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♘xe5 12.♗xh7+ ♔h8 and due to the threat of 13...d3 and 13...g6 White is obliged to play 13.♗d3, but then I could simply take with 13...♘xd3 14.♕xd3, and play 14...e5, with a large plus.

10...exd5 11.♘xd5
After 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♗xe4 ♘xe5 13.♗xh7+ ♔h8 the powerful steed on e5 exerts strong pressure. Also, 14.♗d3 ♗g4 will be met by 15...♖ac8, with a strong initiative.

11...♕xd5 12.♗xe4 ♕xe5 13.♗xh7+ ♔h8 14.♗d3
After 14.a3, Black has 14...g6!? 15.♗xg6 fxg6 16.axb4 ♗f5 17.♕d2 ♖ae8, when in return for a pawn all Black's pieces will be in optimal positions, though 18.♘g3 may yield White a slight edge.



14...♗e6?! In light of the dangerous possibility on move 17, 14...♖e8

Make your best move!

BILBAO CHESS SEPTEMBER 2014

date:
16-20/09

date: 12-20/09
registration: eccc2014bilbao@gmail.com
documentation pick-up: last day 11/09

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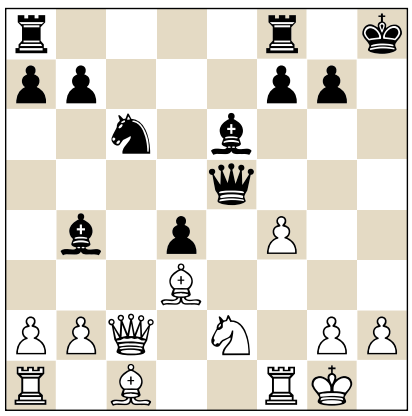
15.♗f4 ♕f6 16.a3 ♗d6 17.♗xd6 ♕xd6 18.♖ad1 ♗g4 19.f3 ♗e6 would have been an excellent alternative, which feels very solid, as 20.♗e4 can be met by 20...♗d5. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops makes my king less vulnerable, and the e3-square is inviting.

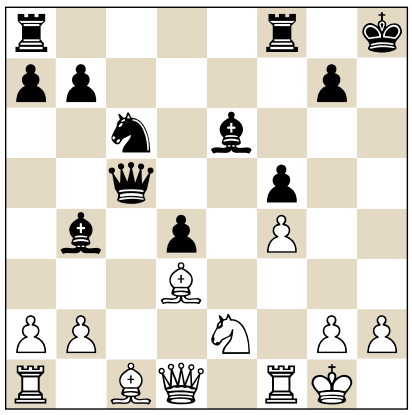
15.f4!



15...♕c5! Grzegorz said that he had overlooked my next move and told me that a previous opponent had succumbed quickly after allowing f4-f5. The typical but inferior 15...♕f6 allows a series of thematic moves starting with 16.♘g3 ♖ac8 17.♕d1 ♕h4 18.f5 ♗d7 19.♘e4, with many threats, as was seen in a similar position from Radjabov-Alekseev, Sochi 2007. The moment you allow f4-f5, White's pieces spring to life in deadly unison. In addition, White could just play f5-f6, which is unpleasant.

16.♕d1 f5!

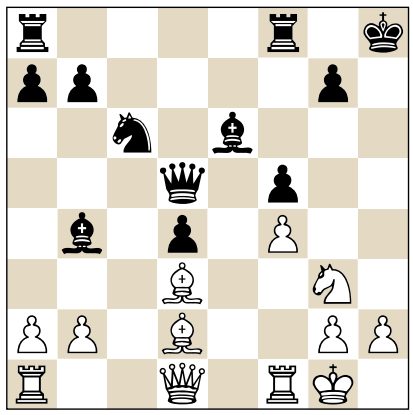
I felt that f4-f5 had to be stopped, and with 16...f5 I control e4. But I might be forced to play ...g7-g6 at some point, when I'll have to reckon with h4-h5. I had some concern later that if my king went to g8, I would lose control of the a2-g8 diagonal.



17.♘g3?! Here he missed a very potent idea resulting in a very exciting and swashbuckling line that was mostly quite forced: 17.a3! ♕a5 18.axb4 ♕xa1 19.b5 ♘e7 (if 19...♘b4 then 20.♘xd4 is too strong) 20.♘xd4 ♗f7 21.♘xf5 (21.♕f3) 21...♘xf5 22.♗xf5 ♕a5 23.♗e3 ♖fe8 24.♖f3 ♖ad8 25.♖h3+ ♔g8 26.♗h7+ ♔h8 27.♗g6+ ♔g8 28.♖h8+ ♔xh8 29.♕h5+ ♔g8 30.♕h7+ ♔f8 31.♗c5+ ♖e7 32.♕h8+ ♗g8 33.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 34.♕xg7+ ♗f7 35.♕xf7+ ♔d6 36.♕f6+ ♔c7 37.♕e5+ ♔b6 38.♕e3+ ♔xb5 39.h4, and White has a 50-50 chance of winning!

17...♕d5 White would really like to threaten ♗c4, but b2-b3 cedes the c3-square and a2-a3 makes b2-b3 with ♗c4 harder to realize. Loathe to put his queen on a file where my rooks could challenge it, he settles for a rather sedate exchange which caused me little grief! Now 18.♕h5+ would accomplish little and his queen would be repulsed with ...♖f6-h6.

18.♗d2



18...♗xd2 18...♖ae8 19.♕h5+ ♔g8 20.♖ad1 ♕d7 21.a3 ♗xd2 22.♖xd2 ♖f6 was OK, but as I was about 30 minutes behind on the clock, I opted for a simpler line, in which I was aiming for the e3-square and a rook exchange to make the defence easier.

19.♕xd2 ♖ae8 20.♖ae1 ♗d7

20...g6 was a serious alternative, as after 21.h4 ♕d8 22.h5 ♕h4 23.♔f2 Black plays 23...g5!.

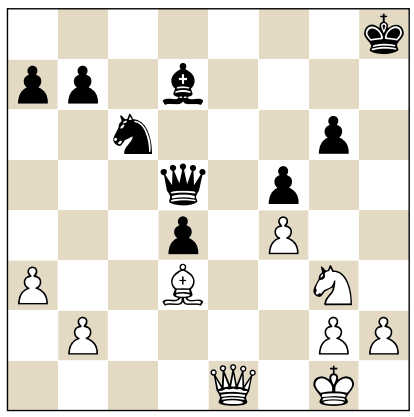
Alternatively, 20...♕xa2 looked a bit risky, though after 21.♘xf5 ♗xf5 22.♖xe8 ♖xe8 23.♗xf5 I consolidate with 23...♕d5 24.♗d3 ♖e3.

21.a3 g6 Covering h5 and f5 with the idea of a later ...♔g7.

22.♖xe8 The natural and expected 22.h4 ♔g7 23.h5 is quelled by 23...♖xe1 24.♖xe1 ♖f6 25.hxg6 ♖xg6, with adequate counterplay for Black.

22...♖xe8 23.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 24.♕xe1

I was pleasantly surprised by the rook trades, since my time deficit was becoming less of a factor. If I could get my king to f6, then ...♘d8-e6 plus ...♗c6 would improve my chances.

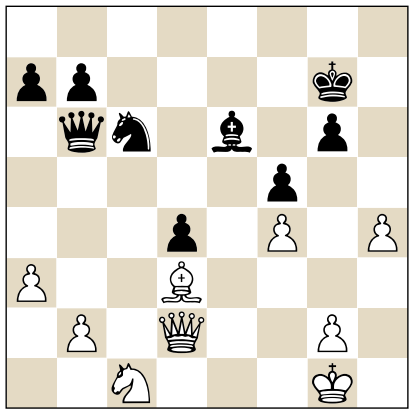


24...♔g7 25.♘e2 ♕b3

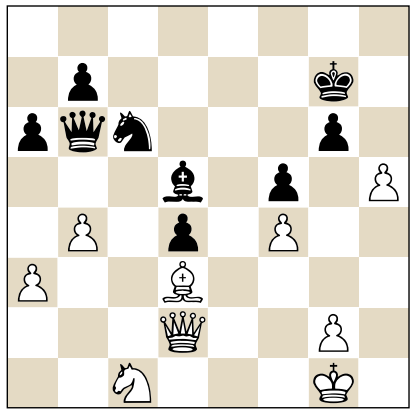
NEW IN CHESS

Tirelessly travelling on his campaign to be FIDE President, Garry Kasparov came to Iceland for a meeting with representatives from the Nordic countries. His visit to Bobby Fischer's grave in Selfoss was a historical moment. Although Fischer was only 42 years old when Kasparov became World Champion, they never met.

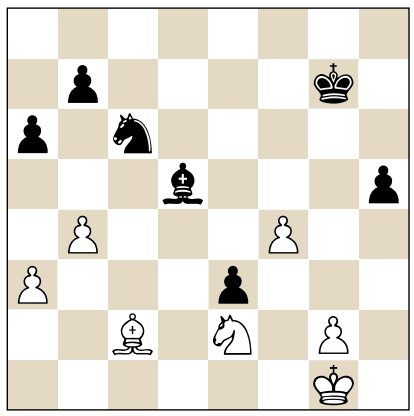
With this sortie I pushed his knight back while improving the position of my bishop. I started thinking I was better, and Houdini agrees!
25...♘d8 is rebuffed by 26.♕b4 ♘e6 27.♗c4 winning the d-pawn.
26.♕d2 ♗e6 27.♘c1 ♕b6 28.h4



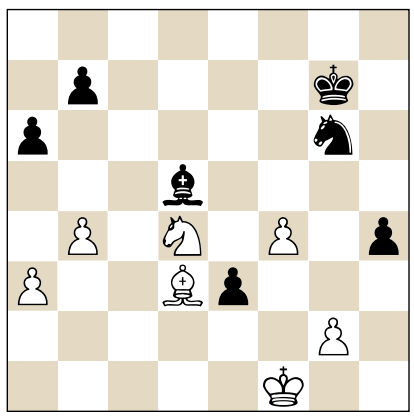
28...♗d5
28...♘a5 is a spirited try, yet after 29.♘e2 ♘b3 he has the fine rejoinder 30.♕b4 ♕c7 31.♘xd4 (more testing was 31.h5!? gxh5 32.♕e1, yet 32...♘c5 33.♘xd4 ♘xd3 34.♘xe6+ ♔f6 35.♘xc7 ♘xe1 fades into equality) 31...♕c1+ 32.♔f2 ♕xf4+ 33.♘f3, and this is drawish.
29.b4
Especially in my mild time-pressure I expected the more ambitious 29.h5 ♗e4 30.hxg6 ♔xg6 31.b4 ♕d8 (the frisky 31...a5 32.♕a2 axb4 is repulsed by 33.♕e6+ ♔g7 34.♗c4 ♕d8 35.g4!) 32.b5 ♕a5 33.♕d1! ♗xd3 34.bxc6 ♗e4 35.cxb7 ♗xb7, and just when Black seems to be gaining the upper hand... 36.♕b3 maintains the equilibrium.
29...a6
29...a5 30.b5 (30.bxa5 ♘xa5 31.♕b4 ♕xb4 32.axb4 ♘c6 33.b5 ♘b4 looks slightly better, but Houdini says = !) 30...♘d8 31.♘e2 ♘e6 seemed attractive, but being behind on the clock I didn't want to be tied to my a-pawn, as the queen might be needed to guard the king. In any event, 32.h5 ♕d6 33.hxg6 ♕xa3 34.♗xf5 isn't clear.
30.h5
I didn't mind these exchanges, as my queen gets to go to e7, where it defends and eyes three key squares: h4, e1 and e3.



30...gxh5 31.♗xf5 ♕d8 32.♗c2 ♕e7 33.♘e2 ♕e3+ 34.♕xe3 dxe3

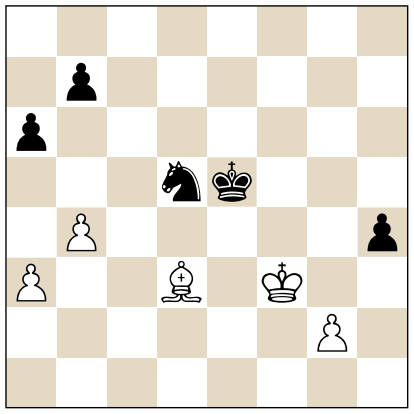


35.♗d3
Instead, 35.♘g3?! ♘d4 36.♘f5+ ♘xf5 37.♗xf5 h4 was what I had hoped for, when Grzegorz would have had to defend very carefully in order to be able to split the point.
35...h4 36.♔f1 ♘e7 37.♘d4 ♘g6



38.♘f5+
No better was 38.♗xg6 ♔xg6 39.♘c2 e2+ 40.♔f2 ♔f5 41.♘e3+ ♔e4 42.♔xe2 (42.♘xd5 ♔xd5 43.♔xe2 ♔e4 draws) 42...♗e6 43.f5 ♗xf5, with a draw.
38...♔f6 39.♘xe3 ♘xf4 40.♘xd5+ ♘xd5 41.♔f2 ♔e5 42.♔f3

As neither side has any winning chances, I decided to eliminate his queenside pawns.



42...b5 43.♗e4 ♘b6 44.♗b7 ♘c4 45.♔g4 ♘xa3 46.♔xh4 ♘c2 47.♗xa6 ♔f6 48.♗xb5 ♘xb4
Draw.

■ ■ ■

Like so many others, I was very interested in the performance of the young Hungarian Richard Rapport (who shortly after the Reykjavik Open celebrated his 18th birthday and crossed the 2700 mark). Rapport won his first four games, but then he lost to Van Kampen. Rapport recovered and reached 6½ out of 8, but in Round 9 he lost to Li Chao, which effectively ended the tournament for him. There is a lot of imagination in his play and odd openings feature frequently in his games, such as his encounter with Gudmundur Kjartansson in Round 2, which started with the strange sequence: 1.♘f3 e6 2.g3 g5 (and yes, Rapport was Black).

The ultimate winner, Li Chao from China, had few problems with his chess. All his victories came smoothly, seemingly without too much effort. Interestingly enough, he started with a surprising first-round draw against Daniel Abrahams, a low-ranked Canadian player (2055). Li Chao followed up with four wins, then a draw, three more wins and then he held Van Kampen to a draw in the last round, finishing on 8 ½ out of 10.

Here's the crucial win against Rapport with his own notes.

> continued on page 80

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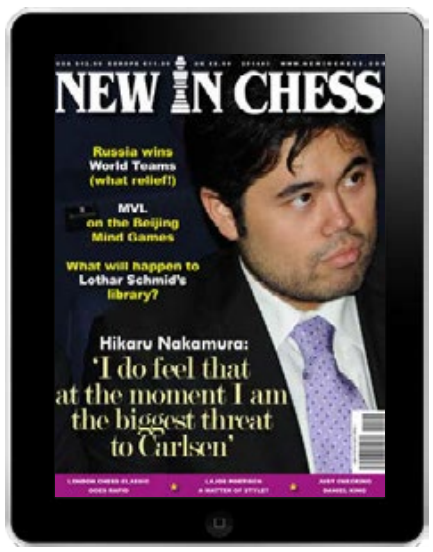
– *Judit Polgar* –

2013#8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The Reykjavik Open

A brief history

Helgi Olafsson

Fifty years go by quickly, but memories of the first Reykjavik International in 1964 are still fresh in the minds of many Icelanders. Johann Thorir Jonsson, the then barely 20-year-old chairman of the Reykjavik Chess Club had come to the conclusion that chess life in Iceland needed a fresh infusion of energy and came up with the idea of a new tournament series. We can only marvel how smart the organizers of the first Reykjavik International were to link the name of the capital of Iceland with the international chess arena. Today it is the oldest regular cultural event in Iceland that bears the name of Reykjavik. Throw in the Fischer-Spassky match in 1972, and we can without any reservation claim that the game of chess has changed the narrative of Iceland.

In 1964, Fridrik Olafsson, Iceland's only grandmaster, was already an experienced player on the international scene, having taken part in top competitions like the 1958 Portoroz Interzonal, the 1959 Candidates' tournament in Yugoslavia, Zurich 1959, Bled 1961 and the Stockholm Interzonal in 1962.

For the first Reykjavik International the organizing committee was lucky to have Mikhail Tal. How his participation came about is shrouded in mystery, but I am sure that MIR, a cultural society of Iceland and the Soviet Union, played a role. Its chairman, Halldor Laxness, Iceland's only Nobel laureate (in 1955 in literature) met with Tal and played the first move for him in at least one simultaneous exhibition. They had some discussions on their favourite subject, literature, and I have heard that Laxness found Tal an interesting conversationalist.

The first tournament was held in Lido, a multifunctional house, which once had a reputation as a sleazy nightclub. As an inquisitive 7-year-old I had read in the papers that they had something called *strip tease* in there, but my parents failed to explain exactly what these two words meant. Now an international chess event was taking place in Lido, and a chess player by the name of Tal was making all the headlines. The day after Tal won his game against Fridrik, a frame of four photos was published in *Morgunbladid* with the text: 'Finally...Tal... had... to think.' Tal swept away the competition, scoring 12½ out of 13. Tal's games were so full of combinational wisdom and daring that the tournament was more like a celebration of chess than a real competition. Everyone who saw him at play fully realized that they stood close to a genius, a chess wizard. In the end, Gligoric came second and Fridrik third.

Tal's only draw was against Gudmundur Palmason, a strong Icelandic master who played little but could boast a win against Andrija Fuderer and draws with Max Euwe and Boris Spassky. At one point in his game against Tal, Palmason had a winning position.

Of the 14 players in the 1964 edition many are gone now, but three of them, Fridrik Olafsson, Trausti Bjornsson and Jon Kristinsson, came to the final ceremony this year to receive a bouquet of flowers. Jon Kristinsson did even more: he played in the anniversary event.

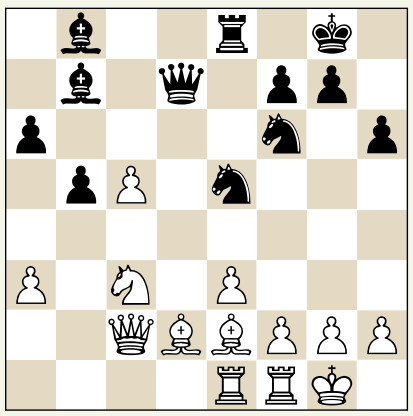
In the 1964 edition, he met Tal in Round 5. Jon sacrificed a piece and it seemed there was no way for Tal to avoid a repetition of moves. Then, all of a sudden Tal gave his queen for completely insufficient compensation, and won anyway. Afterwards he gave an explanation that still echoes in the annals of the Reykjavik tournament: 'It is too far from Riga to Reykjavik to make a draw in so few moves.'

Fridrik Olafsson won the second Reykjavik International in 1966. The organizers tried to get Boris Spassky to play but he was preparing for his World Championship match against Tigran

NEW IN CHESS

The 'heroes of 1964', Trausti Bjornsson, Fridrik Olafsson and Jon Kristinsson, together with Gunnar Bjornsson, President of the Icelandic Chess Federation, and Andrea Margret Gunnarsdottir, ICF Board Member.

Petrosian. The only Soviet player was Evgeny Vasiukov, who came back two years later in the spring of 1968 and shared first place with Mark Taimanov. In the last round, Vasiukov, as White, agreed to a draw after a few moves against one of the locals, which enabled Taimanov to catch him. Vasiukov wanted to have it that way, like two race cars from the same team crossing the finishing line at exactly the same moment. In this edition a game was played that was ranked as the 5th best game in the next *Informant*. Gudmundur Sigurjonsson, only 20 years old, won a spectacular game against Laszlo Szabo.



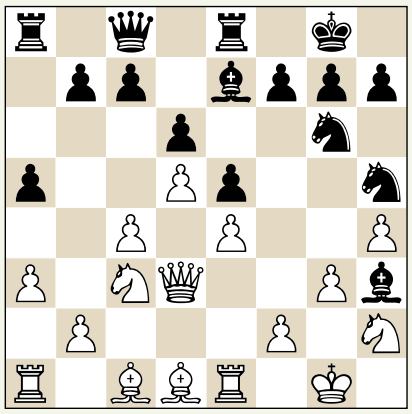
Szabo-Sigurjonsson
Reykjavik 1968
position after 23.bxc5

23...♘f3+!! 24.♗xf3 ♗xf3 25.♘e2 As before, capturing with 25.gxf3 is met by 25...♕h3, winning. **25...♘e4 26.♘g3** A better chance was 26.c6! ♕d6 27.♘g3 ♘xd2 28.gxf3 ♘xf3+ 29.♔g2, but with 29...♕f6 Black stays on top. **26...♘xd2 27.gxf3 ♘xf3+ 28.♔g2 ♕c6 29.e4 ♘xe1+ 30.♖xe1 ♗xg3 31.hxg3 ♖e5 32.♖d1 ♖xc5 33.♖d8+ ♔h7 34.♕e2 f5 35.♖d4 ♖c4! 36.♖xc4 ♕xc4 37.♕xc4 bxc4 38.♔f3 g5 39.exf5 h5 40.♔e4 c3** One black passed pawn will queen. Szabo resigned.

In 1970, Gudmundur won the tournament outright, scoring 12 out of 15 and winning ahead of Ghitescu, Padevsky, Matulovic and Fridrik, whom he beat. For the first time in many years it seemed that Fridrik was having real competition in his home country.

The day after Tal won his game against Fridrik, a frame of four photos was published in Morgunbladid with the text: 'Finally... Tal... had ...to think.'

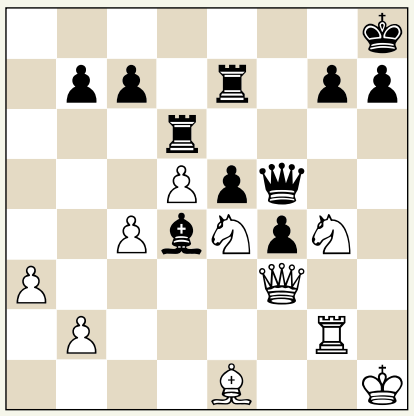
Gudmundur became a grandmaster in 1975 and played in tournaments with the likes of Jan Timman and Ulf Andersson, but still Fridrik remained Iceland's best player in the 70s. As could be seen from his thrilling games at the 1972 Reykjavik tournament, where he shared first place with Hort and Gheorghiu. In a 16-player field he met Vladimir Tukmakov in Round 10. The situation was grim, as Fridrik had only 5 points out of 9, hardly a score that promised a successful result.



Tukmakov-F.Olafsson
Reykjavik 1972
position after 19. ♗d1

Black can retreat the attacked knight and head for a difficult defence against a technically strong opponent who had not lost a single game in the strong Alekhine Memorial a few weeks ago. The tension grew high. Fridrik's army of supporters was in the auditorium awaiting his decision. He thought for a long time and then a curious practical decision appeared on the demonstration board.

19...♘hf4!? 20.gxf4 exf4 21.♗f3 ♗xh4 22.♕e2 f5 23.♔h1 ♖e7 24.♖g1 fxe4 25.♗xe4 ♕d7 26.♕f3 ♖f8 27.♗d2 ♗f5 28.♗xf5 ♕xf5 29.♖ae1 ♘e5 30.♖xe5 dxe5 31.♘e4 ♗xf2 32.♖g2 ♗d4 33.♗xa5 ♖d8 34.♘g4 ♔h8 35.♗e1 ♖d6?!!



As a winning attempt in time-pressure this move ranks as a very original one. Fridrik was trying to remove the blockade on e4 and all eyes were focused on the kingside. Tukmakov should have shifted his attention to the other side, as 36.♗b4! wins.
36.♗h4 ♖e8 37.♘xd6 cxd6 38.♗f2 e4! Now nothing will stop the black pawns. **39.♕h3 e3 40.♗g1 f3 41.♖g3 f2 42.♘xf2 ♕xh3+** And Tukmakov resigned.

'I had to win this game', Fridrik said to Bragi Kristjansson when they drove home. He finished with five more wins, with Jan Timman being his victim in the last round. Fridrik won again in 1976, together with Jan Timman, and in 1978 he had another fine tournament when he was already running for the office of FIDE president.

In the 80s, my generation took over. In 1984 I shared first with Johann Hjartarson and Samuel Reshevsky. Jon Arnason won outright in 1988 and in 1990 yours truly and Jon Arnason were among the many winners who all scored 7½ out of 11.

In more recent years, Hannes Stefansson had many good results. He won outright in 2000 and in all he has been among the winners five times – a record.

> continued from page 76

NOTES BY
Li Chao

KI 20.13 – E71
Li Chao
Richard Rapport
Reykjavik 2014 (9)

This is Round 9. Before this round, I was leading the tournament half a point ahead of five other players, including my opponent. Therefore, this was a very important game on my way to winning the tournament.

1.d4

Rapport has a great talent for finding complicated but interesting variations in seemingly peaceful positions. Moreover, his opening repertoire is so diversified that I thought my best strategy was to play smoothly.

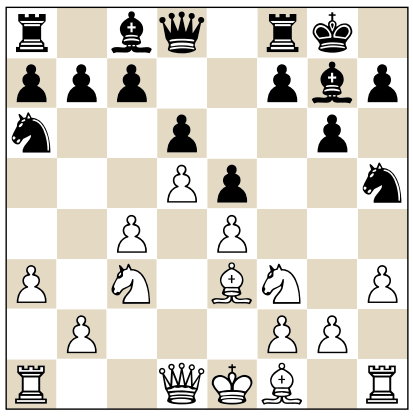
1...♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6

He chooses his favourite King's Indian, hoping to play for a win with Black.

5.h3 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘a6 7.♗e3

White could also have gone for other alternatives, e.g. 7.♗e2 or 7.♗g5.

7...e5 8.d5 ♘h5 9.a3 This idea was first proposed by Riazantsev, and then rapidly gained popularity.



9...c6!?

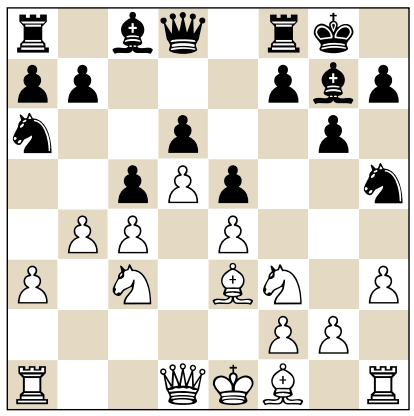
This is a novel move.

In the game Riazantsev-Mamedov, Plovdiv 2012, 9...♕e8 10.b4 f5 11.c5 ♘f6 12.♖c1 ♔h8 was seen.

10.b4 c5!

An interesting move, which took me slightly by surprise. Black intends to close the queenside, so that White cannot stop him from playing ...f7-f5.

White has an edge after 10...f5 11.♗g5 and also after 10...cxd5 11.♕xd5 ♘c7 12.♕d2.



11.♘d2! The position after 11.♖b1 f5 is unclear.

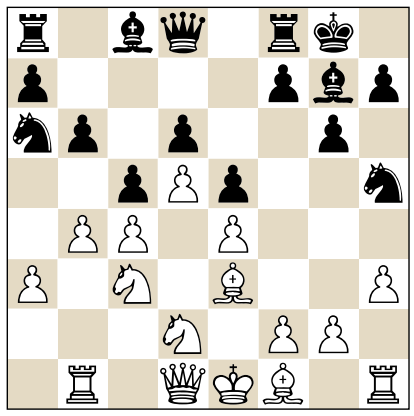
Less good looks 11.b5?!, when after 11...♘c7 Black can comfortably prepare to play ...f7-f5.

11...b6?! I originally thought that after 11...cxb4 12.axb4 ♘xb4 13.c5 f5 14.cxd6 White has some advantage, but Black can play 14...fxe4! 15.♘dxe4 ♗f5!, with active play.

After the immediate 11...f5, 12.exf5 gives White the better chances.

12.♖b1

Now both sides are focusing on the f5-square. Whether or not Black will be able to successfully play ...f7-f5 will determine the outcome of the game.



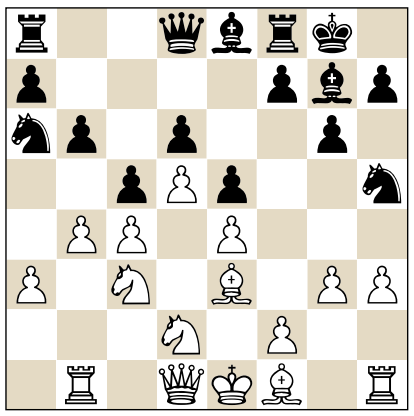
12...♗d7?! A dubious move. Black should have played 12...♕e8!? 13.♘b5 ♕e7!, as after 13...♕e7 White could not play ♘e4 in response to Black's ...f7-f5. After 14.g3 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♖b3 the position is unclear.

Not to be recommended either was 12...f5?!, when after 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♘de4 White has a pleasant edge.

13.g3

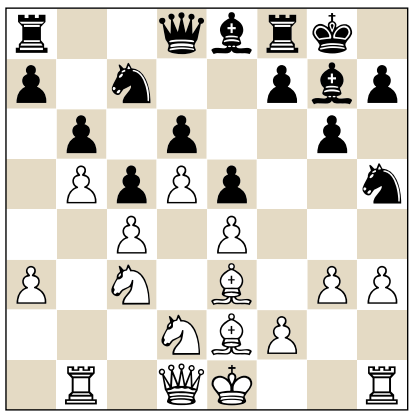
Preparing to play ♗e2 and to control his knight.

13...♗e8



14.b5 If White plays 14.♗e2 first, then b4 will become vulnerable: 14.♗e2 ♘f4 15.♗f3 cxb4 16.axb4 ♘xb4!, and Black is doing great.

14...♘c7 15.♗e2

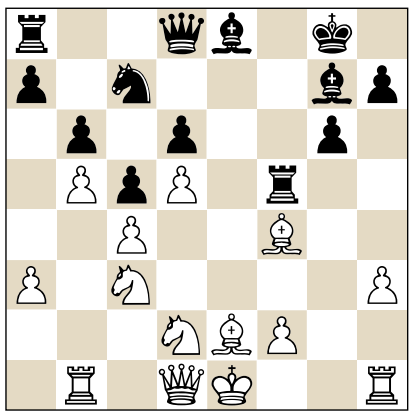


15...f5! The right moment.

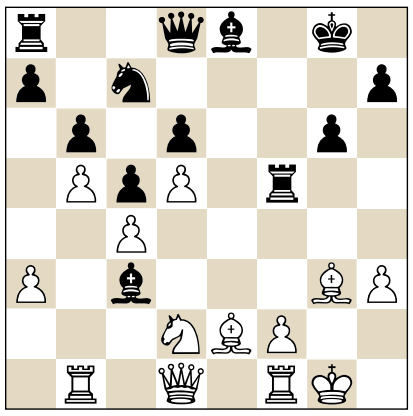
White has a very comfortable position after 15...♘f6 16.g4. And 15...♘f4?! doesn't work: 16.♗f3 ♘d3+ 17.♔e2 ♘f4+ 18.♔f1, and White has a clear advantage.

16.exf5 ♘f4 17.gxf4 exf4 18.♗xf4 ♖xf5

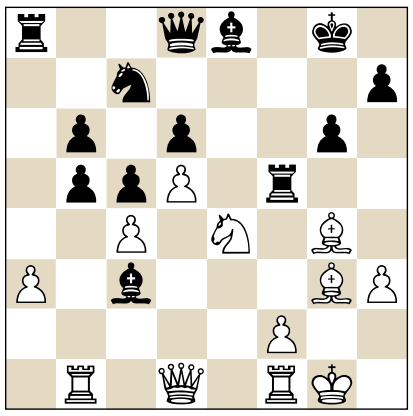
18...♗xc3 19.0-0 ♖xf5 20.♗g3 is exactly the same as what was seen on the board.



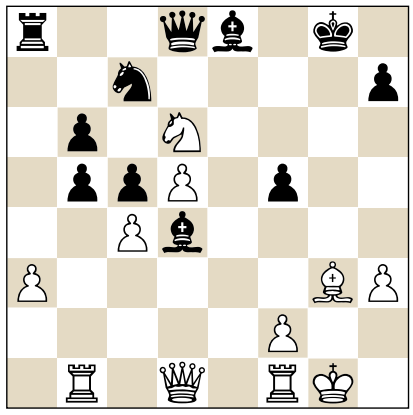
19.♗g3
I didn't want to give my opponent any tactical opportunities, so I went for the safest move.
If I play 19.♗xd6? ♗xc3, there is 20.♗g3 ♘xb5!, with unclear complications.
19...♗xc3 20.0-0
White stands better. Black's problem is that his c7-knight cannot move, and he will have problems in the centre after White plays ♘e4 and ♗g4.



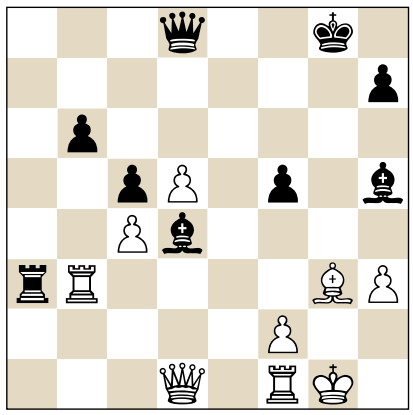
20...a6?!
This move is very consistent with his style, but 20...♗e5 would have been better, even though Black would still be under pressure after 21.♘e4. But I think Rapport does not like such types of positions.
21.♗g4 axb5 22.♘e4



22...♗d4?!
During the game I also noticed an alternative variation: 22...♗e5 23.♗xf5 gxf5 24.♗xe5 dxe5 (White is clearly better after 24...fxe4 25.♕g4+ ♗g6 26.♗f4) 25.♘g3 (25.d6?! ♘e6 26.♕d5 ♗f7 27.♘f6+ ♔g7 28.♘d7! ♕xd7 29.♕xa8 ♕xd6, and Black still has some counterplay), when Black's position is still hopeless, but if I continue too rashly, the position may become a bit complicated, which is not to my taste.
23.♗xf5 gxf5 24.♘xd6
From here on in, the position was so clear that Black could no longer stir up any trouble for me.



24...♗g6 White is also absolutely fine after 24...♕g5 25.♕f3 ♗h5 26.♕f4 ♕xf4 27.♗xf4.
25.♘xb5 ♘xb5 26.♖xb5 ♖xa3 27.♖b3 ♗h5
This looks like his last chance, but my powerful reply helps me to win the game easily.



28.♕xh5!
Clearly stronger than 28.♕c2 ♖xb3 29.♕xb3 ♕g5, when White's task isn't so easy.
28...♖xb3 29.♔h2 ♕f6 30.♕e8+ ♕f8 31.♕e6+ ♕f7 32.♖g1 ♕xe6 33.dxe6 Black resigned.
Although this game does not contain really surprising moves, I think I had good control throughout, without leaving him any tactical chances. Moreover, I felt very happy after winning this game, since I now was very close to winning the tournament ☺.

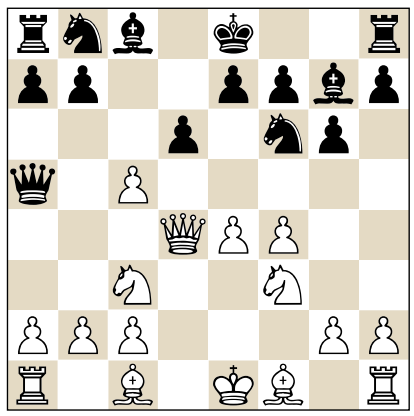
■ ■ ■

Four players finished in joint second place, the tiebreak system deciding on the following order: Robin van Kampen, Eric Hansen, Eduardas Rozentalis and yours truly. Van Kampen is Holland's hope after Anish Giri. In the FIDE Juniors Top 100, Giri is the clear leader, ahead of Richard Rapport. Van Kampen is currently in 6th place. Not surprisingly, when asked to annotate one of his games, he also selected his win against Rapport.

NOTES BY
Robin van Kampen

FR 11.1 – B09
Robin van Kampen
Richard Rapport
Reykjavik 2014 (5)

I am happy to show you my game vs. the dazzling Richie Rapport from the 5th round of the Reykjavik Open. Richie boasts a well-earned reputation for being exceptionally dangerous, but this time I noticed he showed up at the tournament without his energy-generating blonde streaks. Therefore, I had a good reason to be optimistic before the big showdown on Viking soil.
1.e4 d6
Not Richie's main weapon; a week later he opted for his usual 1...e6 against me in the Bundesliga (that game ended in a draw after 67 moves).
2.d4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.f4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c5 6.dxc5!? ♕a5 7.♕d4



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Lawrence Trent: The modern Grand Prix Attack

The Grand Prix Attack is one of White's most enterprising weapons against the Sicilian Defence, and a favourite among club players and Grandmasters alike. This is an opening that must be treated with both caution and respect. Over the past few years Grandmaster Gawain Jones, arguably the world's leading expert on the variation, has used the Grand Prix Attack to defeat a number of world class opponents. This DVD will provide you with a comprehensive repertoire that explores all of Black's ideas against the Grand Prix set up. Trents recommendations include a number of lines which are relatively unexplored by theory, and he analysed them extensively. With these surprises under your belt, you will be well placed to deliver the devastating blows that the Grand Prix Attack is famous for!

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Robert Ris: A Black Repertoire against the Two Knights

With the Traxler Variation (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 Bc5!?) spearheading their repertoire, any player should look forward to fighting for the initiative against the Two Knights with Black. Its slightly dubious reputation shouldn't put you off from buying this DVD - as the author clearly demonstrates - a great deal of spectacular resources for Black are on show, supported by original analysis. Exponents of the Traxler variation in tournament practice include Shirov and Beliavsky, with the latter having used it to defeat Anand at Linares 1991. Tthe DVD also includes a host of ideas for actively meeting 4.d3 and 4.d4 as well, so that after studying the material you basically have a complete repertoire against the Italian Game!

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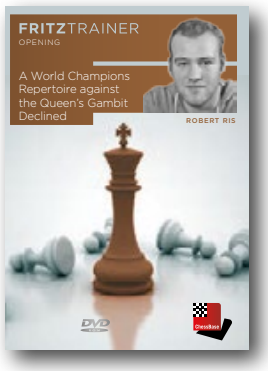
Robert Ris: A World Champion's Repertoire against the Queen's Gambit Declined



On this DVD Robert Ris offers a complete repertoire for handling this solid opening, often featuring a dynamic approach to pose the opponent more practical problems. Both of the main continuations 3... Nf6 and 3…Be7 are covered in two separate parts and their inherent differences and possible transpositions are mentioned wherever they arise. After seriously studying the theoretical lines, the strategic ideas and tactical motifs, you will surely be able to answer the quiz questions successfully and integrate this World Champion repertoire into your own games. With interactive training including video feedback and an exclusive database with 50 essential games.

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Lorin D'Costa / Nick Murphy: Queen's Gambit Declined

The Queens Gambit Declined (known as the 'QGD') is the "Mr. Reliable" of responses to 1.d4. A favourite of many of the world champions, both past and present, its reputation has never been called into question. After the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 - black sets up a solid centre and plays in a classical style; intending simple development, and quick castling to maintain central control. The QGD is a favourite of both club and professional players alike, due to the lack of forcing lines and the chances to outplay your opponent using superior middlegame strategies. Simply put - watch this DVD and your general chess understanding will improve! Let International Master Lorin D'Costa and chess-software expert Nick Murphy take you through the main ideas of the QGD in an easy to understand, conversational style. Video running time: 7 hours 28 min.

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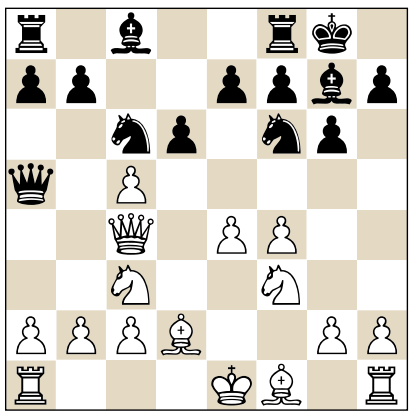
An interesting line that my friend Eric Hansen advised me to play after successfully using it himself in Round 3. White is aiming to swap the queens under favourable circumstances, whilst forcing Black to eventually recapture on c5 with the pawn.

7...0-0 The most challenging continuation. After 7...dxc5 8.♕c4 0-0 9.e5 ♗e6 White goes 10.♕b5, aiming for a slightly better endgame in which the f4-/e5-pawns are limiting Black's activity.

8.♗d2 8.cxd6 ♘xe4 was seen in A.Muzychuk-Lagno, Kazan 2012, with big complications.

8...♘c6 9.♕c4



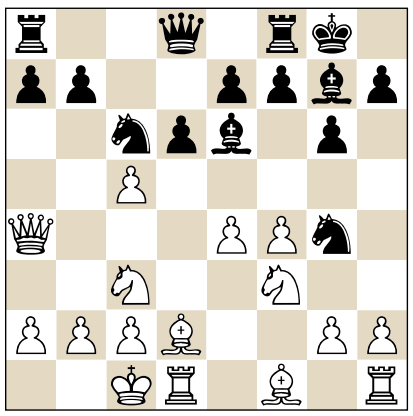
9...♕d8!? A new move. True to his style, Richie was not eager to exchange queens.

Safer would be something like 9...♗e6 10.♕b5 ♕xb5 11.♗xb5 dxc5 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.0-0-0 when White might be a little better.

10.0-0-0 After 10.cxd6 exd6 11.0-0-0 ♗e6 12.♕e2 ♖c8 13.♗e1 ♘b4 Black gets reasonable compensation.

10...♗e6 11.♕a4 11.♕b5 was a better move, when after 11...♘g4 12.♕e2 White would have a clear edge.

11...♘g4

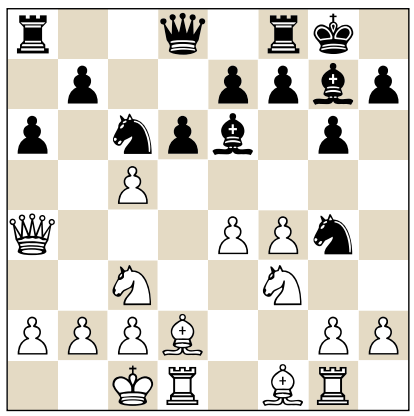


12.♖g1?! Better was 12.♗e1!, when after 12...♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♘e3 14.♖d3 ♘xf1 15.♖xf1 White's king is weakened a bit, but with the extra pawn and active pieces he still has the advantage.

12...a6

An interesting idea, planning to play ...b7-b5 in different positions.

However, 12...dxc5 13.e5 ♘d4 was fine for Black.

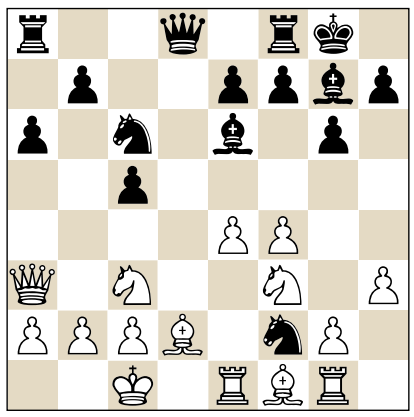


13.h3?!

Being a little over-confident after my 4/4 start, I was ready to let Richie's Trojan Horse disturb my pieces on f2. As you may have guessed by now, trapping it proved to be a bit more difficult than I had expected.

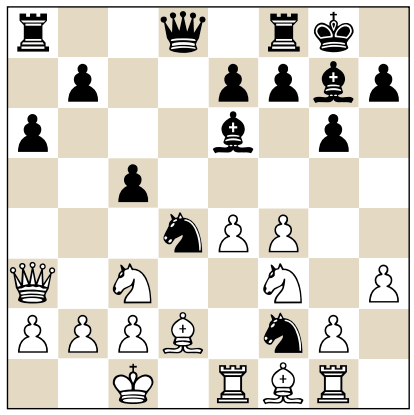
Better would have been 13.f5 gxf5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♕f4, with an unclear position.

13...♘f2 14.♖e1 dxc5 15.♕a3



Around this point both Richie and I seemed to be enjoying ourselves. Richie dug his feet in at the board and was vigorously calculating all the dynamic possibilities his activated pieces could offer. Meanwhile, I was strolling around the playing hall with a strong sense of self-assuredness that I had successfully called a bluff.

15...♘d4



16.♘g5

A necessary move, which I wasn't too thrilled about. The problem is that the option that I initially considered to be strong, would be refuted by a nasty trick: 16.e5? is not good because of 16...♘xh3! 17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.gxh3 dxc3 19.♗xc3 ♗h6 20.♗d2 ♕d4!, and this is clearly better for Black.

On the other hand, 16.♘xd4 cxd4 17.♘d1 wasn't too bad, but having to exchange the knights felt like a moral defeat.

16...♗d7

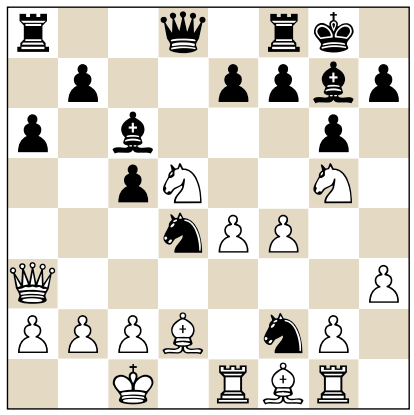
16...b5 17.♘b1 is also highly complicated.

17.♘d5

Continuing the unplanned knights' tango and preparing to bring the queen to e3 or g3 or disturbing Black with ♗a5.

The logical 17.♗e3 was weaker, as after 17...b5 18.♕xc5 ♖c8 19.♕a7 ♘xc2! Black gets a great initiative.

17...♗c6

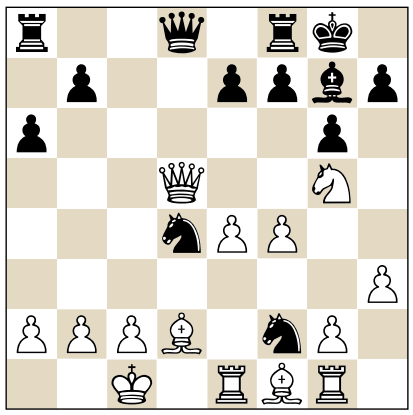


18.♕xc5?

Up to this point my moves were all

justified, but this is too greedy.
18.♕e3? fails to the simple 18...♘xe4 but 18.♗a5 ♕d6 19.♗c4 b5 20.e5 ♕d7 21.♕xc5 was the right way to keep the balance, in the messiest meaning of the word.

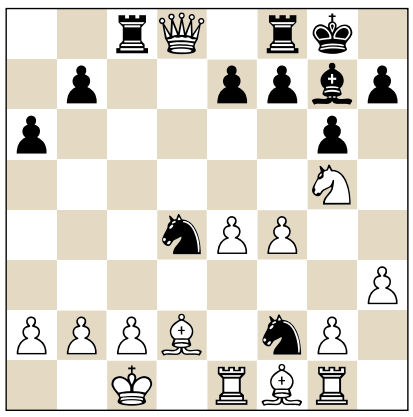
18...♗xd5 19.♕xd5



19...♖c8?

Returning the favour.
19...♕c7! would have given Black a big advantage since after 20.♕c4 (20.c3 b5!, and White's queen is about to get trapped in the middle of the board) 20...♕xc4 21.♗xc4 ♖ac8 White can't control all the threats on the c-file.

20.♕xd8



20...♖fxd8

20...♖xc2+!? may have been better, when after 21.♔b1 ♖xd8 22.♗c3 h6 23.♗xd4 ♗xd4 24.♔xc2 hxg5 25.g3 ♘xe4 White is only marginally better.

21.c3 h6

Forced, as ♗e3xf2 was finally becoming a real threat.

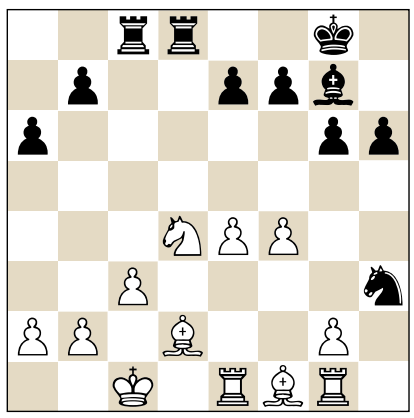
22.♘f3 ♘xh3

Stubborn, but White remains a pawn up due to the unfortunate placing of the pawn on h6.

23.♘xd4

NEW IN CHESS

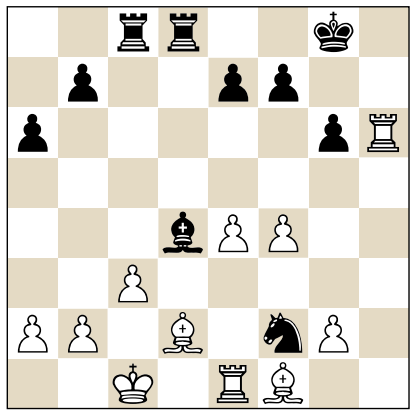
Robin van Kampen: 'Meanwhile, I was strolling around the playing hall with a strong sense of self-assuredness that I had successfully called a bluff.'



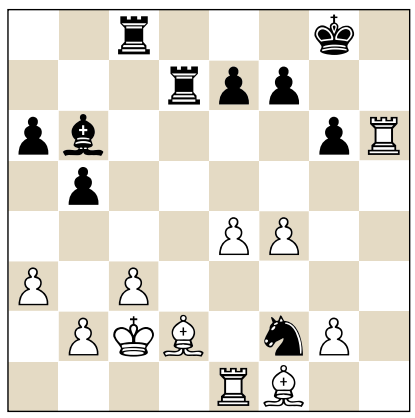
23...♗xd4 23...♘xg1 24.♘b3, and the knight will be trapped with ♗e3 on the next move.

24.♖h1 ♘f2 25.♖xh6

White is a clear pawn up and has the bishop pair. After the weird course of the game so far I managed to increase my advantage reasonably well.



25...b5 26.a3 ♗b6 27.♔c2 ♖d7

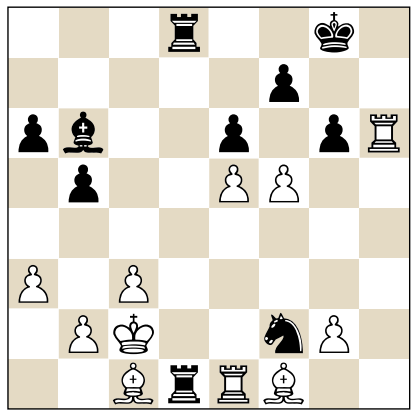


28.♗c1 It's always pleasant to make slow moves like this, preserving the bishop pair.

28...♖cd8 29.e5 e6?

This allows a sudden mating attack. Instead, 29...♔g7! was a lot tougher.

30.f5! ♖d1



31.♗g5

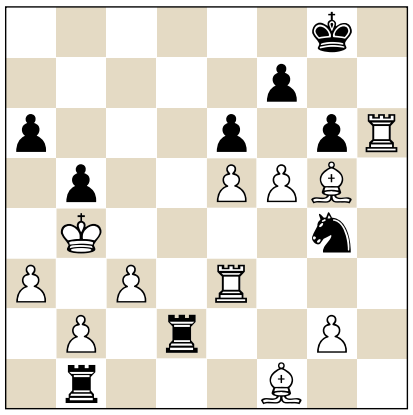
A nice move, which came as a surprise

to my opponent in zeitnot. White is winning.

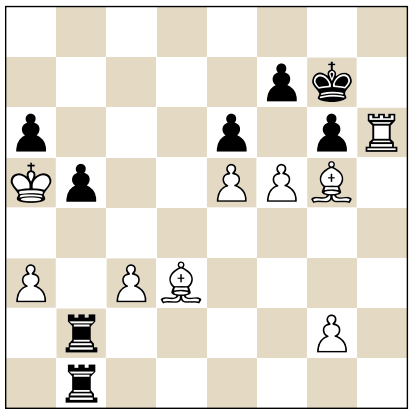
31...♗e3 32.♖xe3

32.♖xd1 ♖xd1 33.♗xe3 ♖xf1 34.fxe6 was the easiest way, intending to win the knight on f2 with ♖xg6+ and ♖f6.

32...♖8d2+ 33.♔b3 ♖b1 34.♔b4 ♘g4



35.♖eh3 Keeping the mating ideas alive. **35...♘xh6 36.♖xh6 ♖dxb2+ 37.♔a5 ♔g7 38.♗d3** White is left with a huge material advantage.



38...♖e1 39.fxg6 fxg6 40.♖xg6+ Curtains.

After I came back from a well-deserved toilet break it appeared that my Hungarian Amigo Richie had left the battling arena without giving me the pleasure of shaking his hand.

I guess that the hard-fought battle had taken its toll and the emotions of dealing with the loss had left him impatient.

Overall, this says nothing about the general atmosphere in Iceland or the playing hall for that matter, which was warm and friendly, to say the least!

■ ■ ■

Eric Hansen has done well in big Opens before. Last year he was one of the eight top-finishers in Cappelle-la-Grande, and he also tied for first, with Nigel Short, at the Canadian Open. In Round 9, he won a spectacular game against top-seed Arkadij Naiditsch.

NOTES BY
Eric Hansen

SI 41.1 – B40
Arkadij Naiditsch
Eric Hansen
Reykjavik 2014 (9)

The Reykjavik Open may have been the best result of my career so far. It couldn't have come at a better time, as reporters of a magazine had flown in from Canada to cover me during the tournament.

I hope you will enjoy my comments on my tense game against Naiditsch, which cemented the tournament as a big success for me.

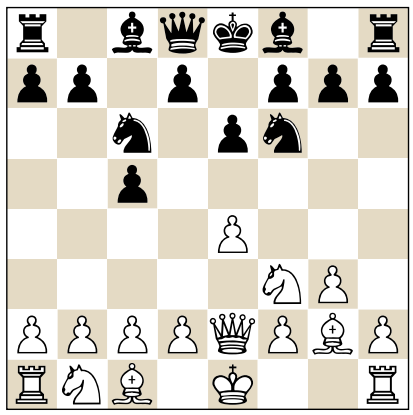
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6

It should be noted that we have a bit of recent history. We played with the same colours in the German Bundesliga last December. I scored a big upset, which Arkadij surely wanted to avenge.

3.g3

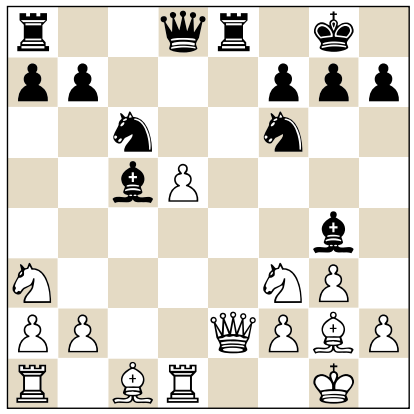
Deviating from the sharp Kan position that arose in our last encounter.

3...♘c6 4.♗g2 ♘f6 5.♕e2



5...e5 A set-up I have used before. Black plays against d4 and ends up playing a Ruy Lopez type of structure.

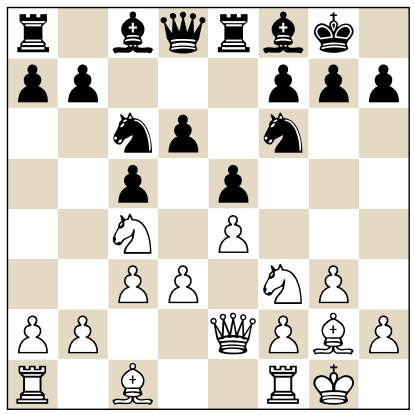
6.♘a3 d6 7.c3 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.d3 After 9.♖d1 ♖e8 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 ♗g4 12.dxc5 Black has 12...d5! 13.exd5 ♗xc5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

with a lot of activity.

9...♖e8 10.♘c4 ♗f8



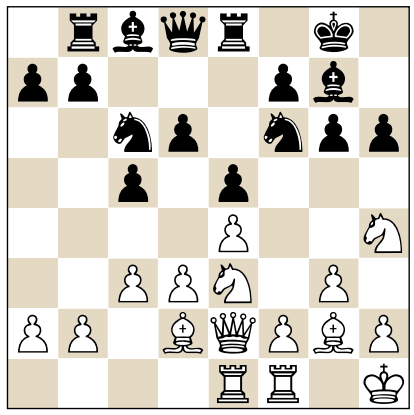
11.♘e3

White is blocking his own bishop, so I was a bit surprised. It commits him to making his kingside initiative work.

11...h6

I'm almost ready to start grabbing space on the queenside and in the centre.

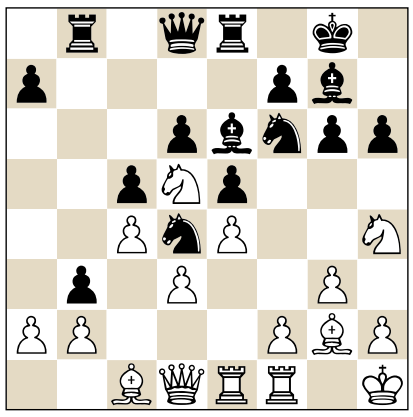
12.♘h4 g6 13.♔h1 ♗g7 14.♗d2 ♖b8 15.♖ae1



15...b5

I could feel the war drums beating. A clash was about to take place in the centre and I was confident I'd get my fair share of chances.

An alternative way to play, which doesn't allow the chaos that ensued, was 15...♗e6 16.♘d5 b5 17.♗c1 b4 18.c4 ♘d4 19.♕d1 b3!

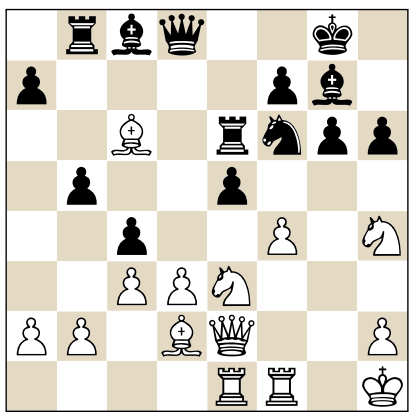


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and it's not clear what White has achieved, whereas Black has managed to gain some space on the queenside.

Black can also play 15...♗d7, as 16.f4? is impossible now because of 16...exf4 17.gxf4 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♕xh4.

16.f4 exf4 17.gxf4 c4 18.e5 dxe5 19.♗xc6 ♖e6

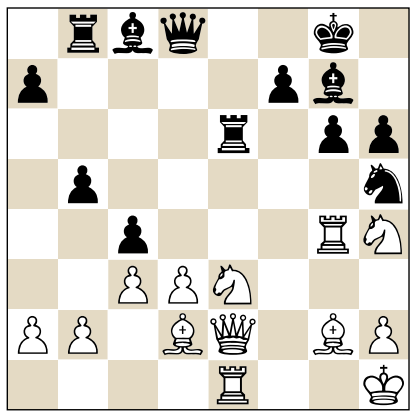


When I played ...b7-b5 a few moves earlier, I calculated until 19...♖e6. I felt like there was plenty of compensation for the piece.

20.♗g2

After 20.fxe5 ♖xc6 21.exf6 cxd3 22.♕g2 ♖xf6 three pawns and the two bishops seemed enough, while 20.♕g2 loses on the spot to 20...♖xc6. And after 20.♕f2 ♖xc6 21.fxe5 ♘h5 22.♕xf7+ ♔h7 23.♘hg2 ♖c7 White has critical holes on the light squares.

20...exf4 21.♖xf4 ♘h5 22.♖g4



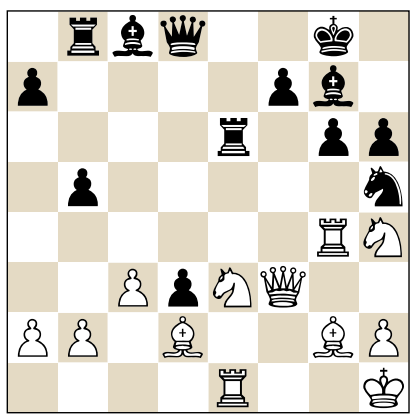
22...cxd3 My original idea was 22...f5 23.♖xg6 ♕xh4 24.♗d5 (24.♘xf5 loses to 24...♕xe1+ 25.♕xe1 ♖xe1+ 26.♗xe1 ♗xf5) 24...♔h7 (24...♗b7 fails to 25.♕f3) 25.♗xe6 ♗xe6 26.♕g2, and the black attack fades away.

23.♕f3

White is playing the necessary moves and keeping the pressure on Black to continue to show his compensation.

23.♕d1 leads to an unbalanced position with chances on both sides after 23...♖e8 24.♗d5 ♗xg4 25.♕xg4 ♕g5 26.♕xg5 hxg5 27.♘f3 (27.♘xg6? is refuted by 27...♘f6 28.♗b3 ♘e4) 27...♘f6 28.♗c6 ♖e6 29.♘d4 ♖d6.

23.♕f2 ♖xe3.



23...♗b7

A clear mistake. We were entering time-trouble and it seemed natural to me to trade off the light-squared bishops to open up his king.

On the other hand, keeping the bishop on c8 means I can harass the rook and exploit the bad coordination of White's pieces.

A better move is 23...♗d7, which keeps the tension and requires White to handle the position with extreme care: 24.♖f1? ♖f6 25.♕d1 ♗xg4 26.♕xg4 ♖xf1+ 27.♘xf1 ♘f6 28.♕g3 ♖b6, and Black has ample compensation coupled with a safe kingside that makes his position preferable.

After 24.♖d1 ♖f6 25.♕d5 ♗xg4 26.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 27.♘xg4 ♖e6 28.♘xh6+ ♗xh6 29.♗xh6 ♘f6 Black still has to prove full compensation.

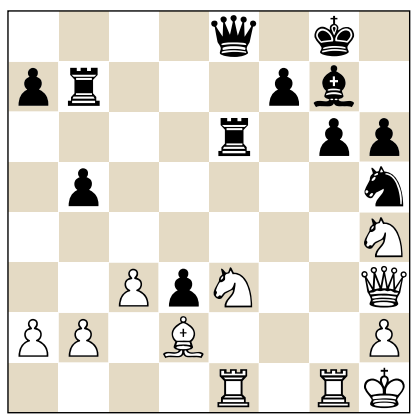
I thought 23.♕f3 was a mistake in view of 23...♖f6, but I had missed 24.♖d4. I assumed it was bad and didn't look any further. However, after 24...♕f8 25.♕d5 ♗e6 26.♕d6 ♖f2 the position remains quite unclear, with the knight coming to f4.

24.♕h3 ♕e8

Black has good chances to hold after 24...♗c8 25.♖f1 ♖f6 26.♘hf5 (a move that must be considered whenever my knight is on h5) 26...♗xf5 27.♘xf5 ♖xf5 28.♖xf5 gxf5 29.♖h4 ♘f6 30.♕xf5 ♕d7 31.♕f3 ♖e8 32.♖d4 ♕e6.

25.♗xb7 ♖xb7 26.♖gg1

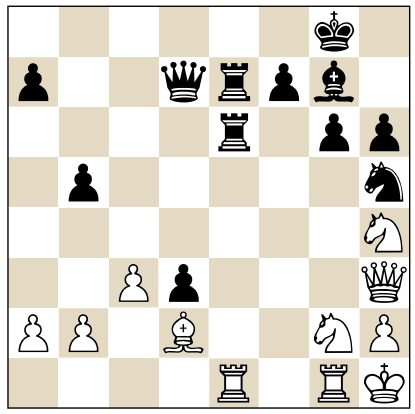
White is going to block the long diagonal and then proceed to trade off some material. I still had some compensation, but I would need some help from the clock. Still, the position isn't so easy.



26...♖be7 27.♘eg2

White's pieces coordinate nicely.

27...♕d7



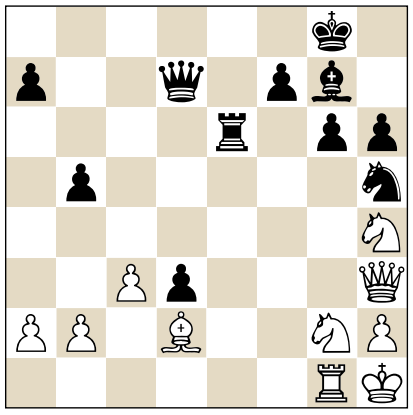
NEW IN CHESS

In a turbulent time-scramble against top-seed Arkadij Naiditsch, Canada's Eric Hansen kept a cool head to score a win that contributed significantly to his best result so far.

28.♖xe6

After the game Arkadij pointed out 28.♖e3 ♘f6 (28...♖xe3!? 29.♕xd7 ♖xd7 30.♘xe3 ♘f6 31.♘d1 ♘e4 32.♗e3, and Black must suffer and resist a lot) 29.♖f1 ♖xe3 30.♕xd7 ♖xd7 31.♘xe3 ♘e4 32.♘f3 f5, and Black's good coordination gives him decent drawing chances.

28...♖xe6



29.♘f5!?

It's not easy to figure out which piece to move!

After 29.♘e3 ♘f6 the knight is headed to e4, with tactical possibilities.

After 29.♘f3 ♕d5 30.♗e3 b4 31.cxb4 ♕xa2 White needs more pawns.

And White gets into trouble after 29.♕f3 ♖f6, when he has to play 30.♘f4 to stay in the game, since 30.♕a8+ loses to 30...♔h7 31.♖d1 ♕g4, and 30.♕e4 ♘g3+ 31.hxg3 ♕h3 is mate.

29...♕d5

After 29...gxf5 the following line looks forced: 30.♕xh5 ♕d5 31.b3 ♖e2 32.♗xh6 ♗xh6 33.♕xh6 d2 34.c4 bxc4 35.bxc4 ♖xg2 36.♖xg2+ ♕xg2+ 37.♔xg2 d1♕ 38.♕g5+ with perpetual check.

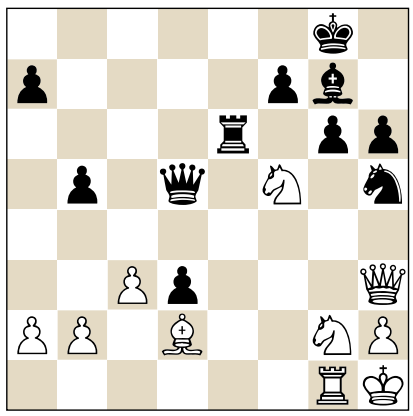
30.♘e3?

I couldn't tell if White was trying to play for a win by keeping more pieces on the board.

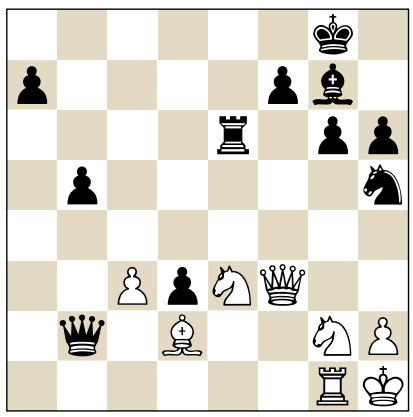
Instead, 30.♘d4 was called for: 30...♗xd4 31.cxd4 ♕xd4 32.♖e1 (32.♗c3 ♕d5 is unclear) 32...♘g7, and it's hard to assess with three pawns for the piece, but practically it's easier for Black.

Bad was 30.♘xh6+? ♗xh6 31.♗xh6 d2 32.♕g4 ♖e5! 33.b3 ♘g3+ 34.♕xg3 d1♕, and wins.

Finally, 30.♘xg7 ♔xg7 31.♖d1 ♖e2 would lead to a very annoying position to defend.



30...♕xa2 31.♕f3 ♕xb2



32.♖d1 White has freed up his queen for a considerable cost.

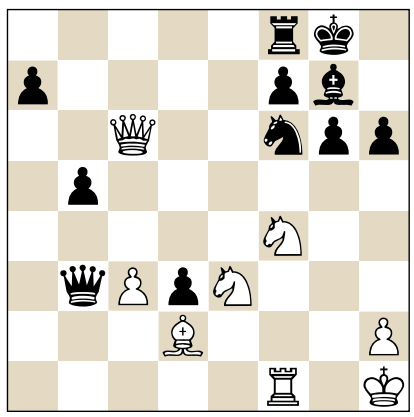
32...♘f6 Aiming for the e4-square. Better was 32...♗xc3 33.♗xc3 ♕xc3 34.♘g4 ♔g7 35.♖xd3 ♕c6 and push the pawns, since White's kingside structure makes it hard for him to attack.

33.♘f4 The last phase of the game was played in extreme zeitnot.

33...♖e8 After 33...♖d6 34.c4, three or four pawns for a piece is favourable, but there is a good chance that one of them will fall, leading to a drawish ending.

34.♕c6 After 34.♘xd3 ♕b3 Black has a safer king and more threats, such as simply pushing the a-pawn.

34...♕b3 35.♖f1 ♖f8



36.h4

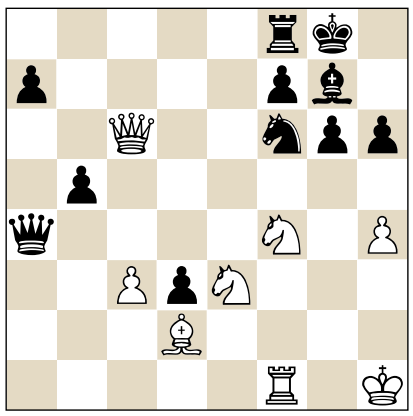
White is going for broke, and succeeds in creating some threats!

After 36.♘xd3 ♖d8 37.♘c5 ♕b2 38.♗c1 ♕e2 39.♕g2 ♕h5 40.♘e4 ♘xe4 41.♕xe4 ♕c5 42.c4 bxc4 43.♕xc4 a draw would be the most likely outcome.

36...♕a4?

A time-trouble error.

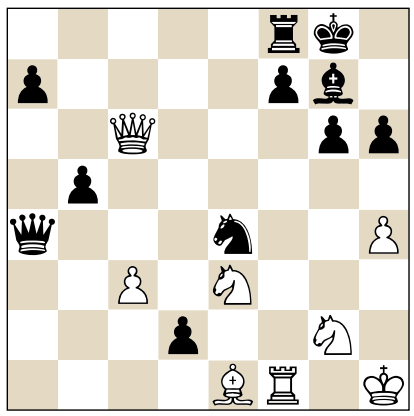
The way to play was either 36...♕a2 37.♖f2 ♕a4 38.c4 ♕a1+ 39.♔g2 or 36...a5 37.h5 g5 38.♘xd3 ♕a2 39.♗c1 ♘xh5 40.♔g1 ♘g3, in both cases with the better chances for Black.



37.♘fg2? An awful blunder with seconds left on the clock. Arkadij missed his last chance here: 37.c4 ♕a2 38.♗b4 ♖b8 39.♗c3, when all of White's pieces suddenly pounce, while Black's monarch is away.

37...♘e4 38.♗e1 d2

White is lost.



39.h5 dxe1♕ 40.♖xe1 ♘g3+

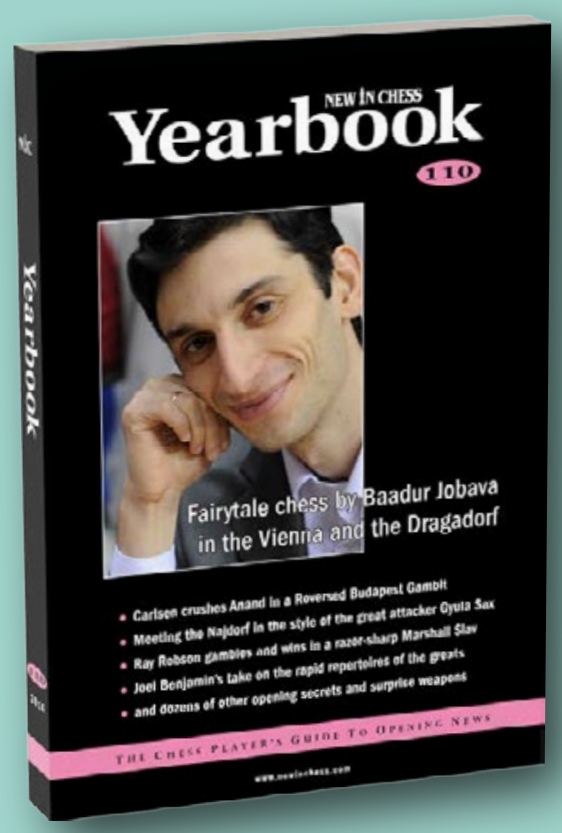
White resigned.

A back and forth game until the very end. I'm happy with the sacrifice, although my subsequent play left much to be desired. It's always a pleasure for me to step into the ring with a top player and play an interesting game. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did!

■ ■ ■

All of which leaves, apart from countless foreigners (such as Harika Dronavalli from India, who had a 2623 performance) 99 Icelanders that I have not yet mentioned. The young generation was closely watched. Vignir Vatnar Stefansson, who celebrated his 11th birthday a few weeks before the event started, scored 5 out of 10, netting more than 50 rating points. Right now his strength has to be well over 2000.

Our youngest grandmaster, Hjörvar Steinn Gretarsson, is 20 years old. He had a good tournament and finished with 7½ out of 10. Hjörvar won against Gawain Jones in Round 9, but was of the opinion that his best effort was a round earlier.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NEW IN CHESS Yearbook 110

The Chess Player's Guide to Opening News

With answers to urgent questions like:

- Will 8.h3 finally knock the Najdorf Sicilian off its perch?
- Is Bobby Fischer's pet 4...b6 also good in Nimzo- and Bogo-Indians?
- How can Black avoid the English Attack in the Paulsen Sicilian?
- Is the Vienna Game offbeat enough for Baadur Jobava?
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- Could Anand have beaten Magnus Carlsen with the Sämisch Nimzo?
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- How do Gelfand, Caruana and Short adapt their openings for rapid events?
- Which trap against the Alapin Sicilian even Ian Nepomniachtchi fell for?
- Has Bacrot found the way for Black to equalize in the Classical KI with 7...ed4?
- How did Jan Timman deal with the Dutch at Tata 2014?
- With what huge novelty did Carlsen beat Anand at the Zurich blitz?
- Was Richard Rapport's 3.g4 in the Symmetrical English too outrageous?

and many more!

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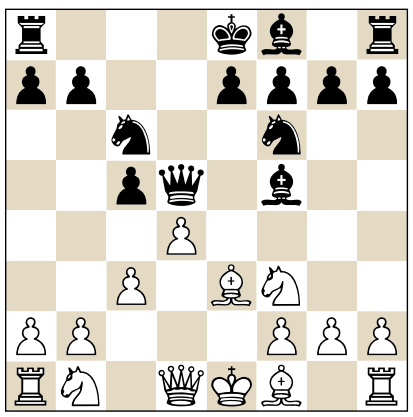
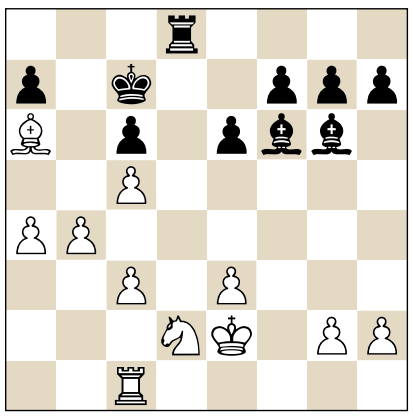
SI 46.4 – B22
Stef Soors
Hjörvar Steinn Gretarsson
Reykjavik 2014 (8)

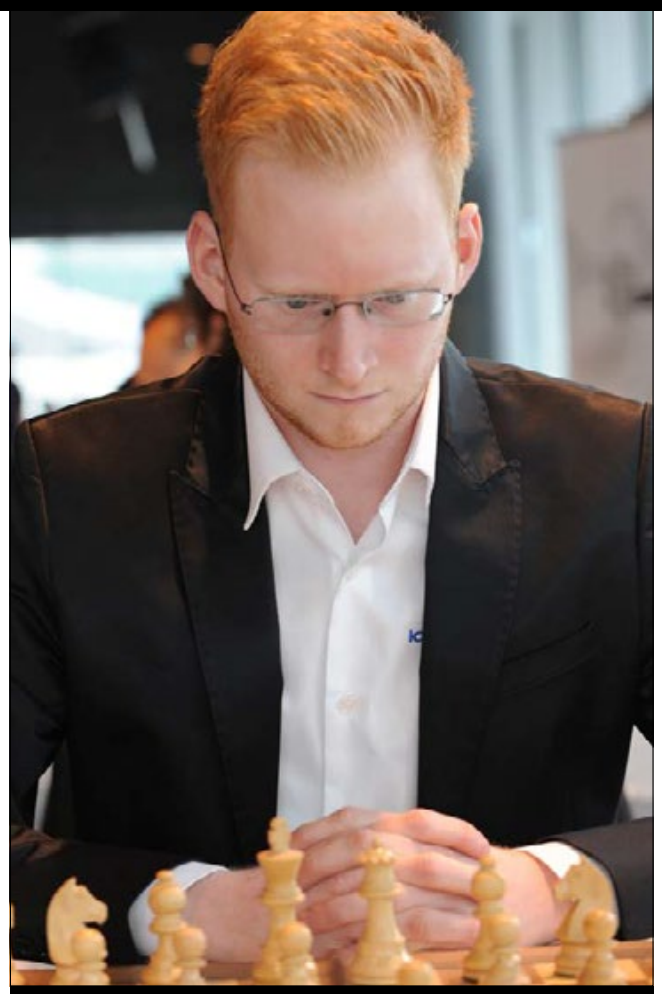
1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♕xd5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♗f5 This is a popular move against the Alapin these days. Gawain Jones drew my attention to it when beating Stefan Kristjansson in the 2012 Reykjavik Open. **6.♗e3** He is not ready to take the pawn right away. **6...♘f6**



7.♘a3 Hjorvar was ready for 7.♘bd2, as Soors had played this before. After 7...cxd4 8.♗c4, his opponent Saleh Salem gave up his queen with 8...dxe3 9.♗xd5 exd2+ 10.♕xd2 0-0-0, with a complicated game.
7...e6 Black is eager to part with the c5-pawn.
8.dxc5 looks fine, but Black can still castle queenside, which seems to be one of the points of the set-up.
8.♘b5 0-0-0 9.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 10.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♘d5 12.♘bd4 ♗e4 13.♘xc6 ♘xe3+ 14.fxe3 bxc6 15.♘d2 ♗g6 16.♗a6+ ♔c7 17.b4 ♗e7 18.♔e2 ♖d8 19.a4 ♗f6 20.♖c1

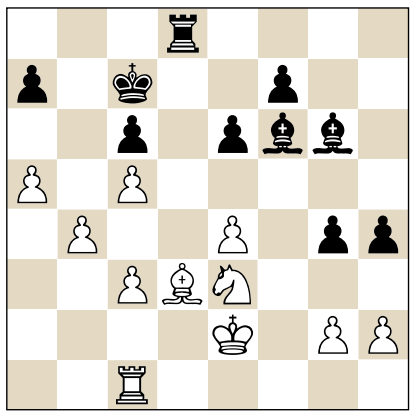


20...h5!

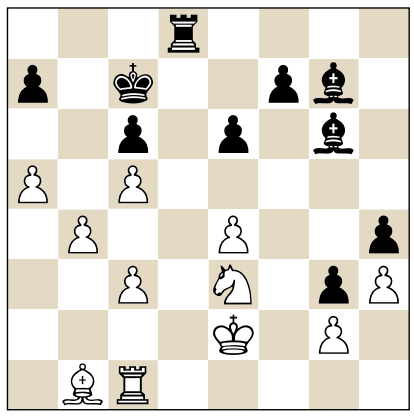


Iceland's youngest GM, Hjörvar Gretarsson, demonstrated the joys of a strong bishop pair.

Soors found it hard to hit upon a constructive plan, but Black can expand his territory on the kingside and has a much easier game.
21.a5 ♗f5 22.♗c4 g5 23.e4? This move does not throw away the game, but bears witness to a certain impulsiveness. He should have gone for 23.♘f3, heading for the d4-square.
23...♗g6 24.♗d3 h4 25.♘c4 g4 26.♘e3



26...g3! Black keeps an eye on the c3-pawn tying the rook down to defend it. Here White had to opt for 27.hxg3 hxg3, even though, as Hjörvar said, Black has play along the h-file, and with his two bishops his chances are much better. **27.h3 ♗g7 28.♗b1?** The final slip. Now Hjörvars strikes with his bishop pair.



28...♗h5+! 29.♘g4 ♗h6! 30.♖d1 He could have put up more resistance with 30.♖e1 (not 30.♖c2 f5!), but Black still wins with 30...♗d2 followed by 31...♗xc3.
Another way to finish is 30...♖d2+ 31.♔f1 ♗xg4 32.hxg4 e5! and White is in zugzwang: 33.♖e2 h3! 34.♖xd2 h2! would be a nice finishing line.
30...♗xg4+ 31.hxg4 ♖xd1
And White resigned because of 32.♔xd1 h3. ■

Reykjavik 2014

					TPR
1	Li Chao	CHN	2700	8½	2698
2	Robin van Kampen	NED	2603	8	2727
3	Eric Hansen	CAN	2587	8	2695
4	Eduardas Rozentalis	LTU	2623	8	2675
5	Helgi Olafsson	ISL	2546	8	2598
6	Erwin l'Ami	NED	2646	7½	2637
7	Dronavalli Harika	IND	2487	7½	2623
8	Hjörvar Gretarsson	ISL	2511	7½	2588
9	Hannes Stefansson	ISL	2541	7½	2567
10	Raja Panjwani	CAN	2460	7½	2508
11	Arkadij Naiditsch	GER	2706	7	2584
12	Richard Rapport	HUN	2681	7	2625
13	Alejandro Ramirez	USA	2599	7	2530
14	Ferenc Berkes	HUN	2687	7	2554
15	Gawain Jones	ENG	2651	7	2564
16	Walter Browne	USA	2444	7	2480
17	Henrik Danielsen	ISL	2501	7	2486
18	Grzegorz Gajewski	POL	2631	7	2465
19	Vladimir Hamitevici	MDA	2456	7	2456
20	Nils Grandelius	SWE	2600	7	2499
21	Tatev Abrahamyan	USA	2376	7	2454
22	Mackenzie Molner	USA	2528	7	2466
23	Aleksandar Colovic	MKD	2493	7	2437
24	Irina Krush	USA	2490	7	2470
25	Rune Djurhuus	NOR	2447	7	2410
26	Milos Pavlovic	SRB	2506	7	2418

255 players, 10 rounds

Mad dogs and Englishmen

'In Bengal, to move at all, is seldom if ever done. But mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun.' (Noel Coward, 1931)

I have a confession to make: I am a closet imperialist. That's right – a reactionary. My great political hero, after Winston Churchill, is Robert Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury (1830-1903), who, in cabinet and eventually as Prime Minister, orchestrated policies that culminated in bringing one quarter of mankind under English sway. India, which had been progressively subjugated following Robert Clive's victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, was the crown jewel of this vast empire. Calcutta, in Bengal, was its capital. Thus it was to the very heart of the former Raj, with its echoes of dim and distant colonial grandeur, I headed, in March, for the 19th Kolkata (Calcutta) Open.

In truth, Calcutta is not the most attractive city – being maddeningly noisy, crowded, dirty and stifling hot. The potholed pavements are replete with every conceivable obstacle, both inanimate and human. The ubiquitous homeless sleep, oblivious to their chaotic surroundings, in the most extraordinary, unimaginable places. Amidst the cacophony and squalor one can find the occasional oasis of calm, like the Marble Palace – a 19th century private home with lake, zoo, and 150 servants, owned by a musician friend of Surya Ganguly's. The interior is stuffed with predominantly European chandeliers, clocks, busts, statues, pianos and furniture. It counts works by Rubens, Titian, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Murillo etc. among the numerous oil paintings. It is hard to believe, even just 10 metres from the gates, that such a sanctuary could exist on a narrow street jammed with people, rickshaws, and small shops selling fabrics.

As top seed, I was invited to hold forth at a well-attended press conference at Gorky Sadan – the Russian cultural centre where the tournament was held – on the day before the kick-off. Apart from the Open, with its unusually high average rating in excess of 2400, and the FIDE election, which promises to be a close race this year, I was also asked questions on two major topics that inevitably make an appearance in any chess interview in India – Anand and cricket. Vishy, to the surprise of many – your writer included – had just made an excellent start to the Candidates. Was this the big comeback? I cautioned against the perils of extrapolating on the basis of just three games, but nevertheless likened Vishy to Bilbo Baggins in *Lord of the Rings*. Freed from the heavy burden of carrying the title, a gaiety and lightness seemed to have returned to his play. Indeed, so convincingly would he later win the tournament that it appears he wants his 'Precious' back as soon as possible. While I do not envision Carlsen being deposed just yet, I expect we will see a different and more dangerous Anand this time, unfettered from the fear of defeat. Magnus, with his profound historical knowledge, will be acutely aware of the example of Botvinnik: it would be a gross mistake to underestimate a middle-aged man whom one has already thrashed quite recently. However, understanding this point intellectually and truly feeling it within are two different things. Therein lies perhaps the biggest potential pitfall for the Norwegian.

My preparation for Calcutta was less than ideal, to put it mildly. I had been on a short tour to New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Australia, for about a fortnight, as part of Kasparov's FIDE election campaign. Instead of flying straight from Melbourne to India to acclimatise and rest, I had returned home to Athens for a few days first. From a professional perspective, I knew this was insane, but I hold this quaint notion that once in a while one ought to see one's family. The result was a stiff back from the constant discomfort of cattle-class and my body had no idea in which time-zone it was. At the press conference I had predicted that, if I began well, I could challenge for first prize – but the 'if' was to prove my undoing.

Given that my energy reserves were already somewhat depleted, it was perhaps not the wisest idea to visit the Victoria Monument on the morning of the first round. In mitigation, the pairings were not posted and I figured that, as I couldn't prepare anyway, this was as good a time as any to see the city's most famous

tourist attraction – something which I had singularly failed to do on my two previous visits to Calcutta, in 1998 and 2009. This huge, imposing marble edifice, set in a beautifully tended park, and built at the suggestion of the divisive Viceroy, Lord Curzon, is the apogee of imperial arrogance and swagger. I love it. The Indians have maintained it well and turned it into a nice museum. Afterwards I undertook a short pilgrimage to the nearby bastion of Anglicanism – St. Paul's Cathedral – where the serene calm provided the perfect environment for reflection before the hurly-burly of competition began.

'Several hours later I began to regret my excursion when I found myself terribly dehydrated, with an empty water bottle.'

A veritable scrum of photographers snapped the Sports Minister (and coincidentally President of the Alekhine Chess Club) as he made the ceremonial opening move on top board. Several hours later I began to regret my excursion when I found myself terribly dehydrated, with an empty water bottle, and no time remaining to replenish supplies, in a winning theoretical rook and pawn endgame against Kidambi. To my great chagrin, I failed to reconstruct the correct sequence and only drew. A win in the second round was followed by a fiasco against the experienced Bangladeshi GM Ziaur Rahman, when, having obtained an excellent position from the opening, I chose the wrong continuation and found myself drifting planlessly. Further errors compounded these difficulties and I was quickly and unceremoniously routed. A careless blunder against a 2300 in the fourth round almost resulted in further calamity, but I escaped with a half point. After this desolation, recovery required something exceptional. It was not to be: I was exceedingly fortunate to score +3 in my remaining games, but, alas, was well off the pace. For the sake of decency and decorum I will draw a veil, or better still a niqab, over further details of this embarrassing performance.

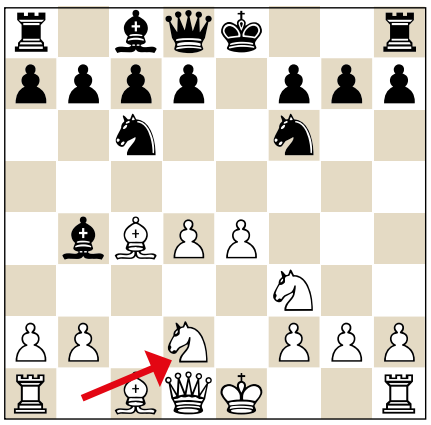
One of the great delights of being in India is not only the food, but the cricket. This is particularly true when your guest-house has no Internet access, and the World T20 Cup is taking place. However, being conscious of the fact that half the readership of this magazine has no more idea about the game than I do about Swahili grammar, I will confine myself to just a couple of points: 1) England was utterly humiliated by the Netherlands – which is almost as low as one can possibly stoop; 2) The former President of the All India Chess Federation, N.Srinivasan, from Tamil Nadu, was headline news for all the wrong reasons. To explain: Mr. Srinivasan is (or was) rather better known as being the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). He is also due to take office as International Cricket Council chairman in June. Unfortunately, his son-in-law was charged with illegal betting last year. The Supreme Court has taken the firm view that no independent investigation can take place with his father-in-law (who, in a rather questionable conflict of interest, also owns one of the most valuable franchises in the Premier League) still in charge of the federation. One judge went so far as to call his continued presence as 'nauseating' (n.b. he has since stepped down). Obviously, such a shocking state of affairs could never happen in the chess world.

The trophy was eventually carried off by Oliver Barbosa – edging out Babu Lalith on tie-break with 7½/10. While this was a considerable personal triumph for the Filipino, the tournament was perhaps more interesting for observing the development of the younger Indian players, such as Vidit (arguably the most talented of the bunch), Adhiban, Sethuraman etc., all of whom are in their early 20s and around the 2600 Elo mark. In general terms, the play of this generation, suckled on computers, is characterised by deep preparation and powerful calculation. As I understand, roughly 30 players in the country hold sinecures at various state-owned companies, and this provides the financial security to allow them to devote themselves to their art. While I did not see any world-beaters in Calcutta, it is clear that the future of Indian chess is in secure hands. It would have been fascinating to have seen how the older, established members of the national team, like Harikrishna and Ganguly, would have fared against them. Both made an appearance towards the end of tournament, to spectate and present prizes. Ganguly had originally entered, but withdrew at the last minute because of illness. On the other hand, Hari – if I have interpreted his oblique comments correctly – was unable to agree financial terms, a not uncommon problem when you are a cut above the rest. ■

Giuoco Piano con fuoco

Jeroen Bosch

7.♘bd2!?

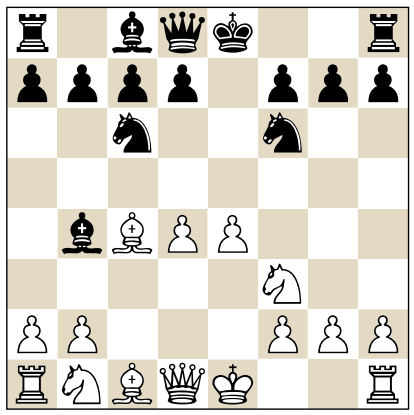


In the last couple of years Swedish grandmaster Jonny Hector has repeatedly played an interesting pawn sacrifice in an age-old position in the Italian Game. He has been quite successful, and consequently others have followed in his footsteps. Among them 2600+ players like Pavel Ponkratov and Ray Robson, and former women's World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk. High time to take a look at what it's all about!

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3

One would argue that White prepares d2-d4, but these days the normal follow-up is the more restrained d2-d3, when play resembles the Ruy Lopez.

4...♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 ♗b4+

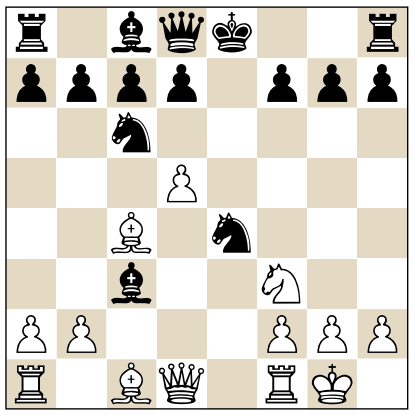


The check is essential, for otherwise White would have built up an ideal centre with tempo.

We have arrived at the absolute main line of the Italian Game – the name Giuoco Piano, 'the quiet game', is often used but is, in my opinion, only appropriate for the quieter lines with d3.

To introduce our subject, let's briefly consider the options as the theory knows them.

■ The most natural one is 7.♘c3, which was already analysed by Greco in the 17th century. After 7...♘xe4 8.0-0 ♗xc3 only Møller's 9.d5! is of interest (please take note of this characteristic advance in the centre to gain space and create attacking chances).



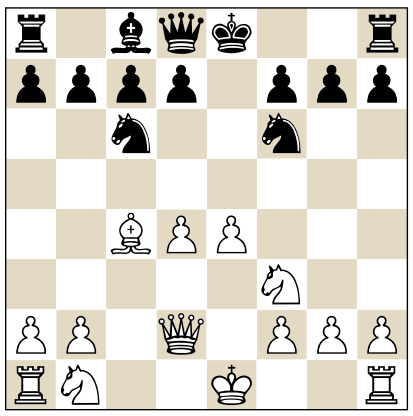
However, it is well established that both 9...♗f6 10.♖e1 ♘e7 11.♖xe4 d6 and the less complicated 9...♘e5 10.bxc3 ♘xc4 11.♕d4 0-0! (as played by Karpov, Spassky and Anand) are theoretically very satisfactory for Black.

■ So later the more modest 7.♗d2 came into vogue. Now 7...♗xd2+ 8.♘bxd2 d5! 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♕b3 ♘ce7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖fe1 is about

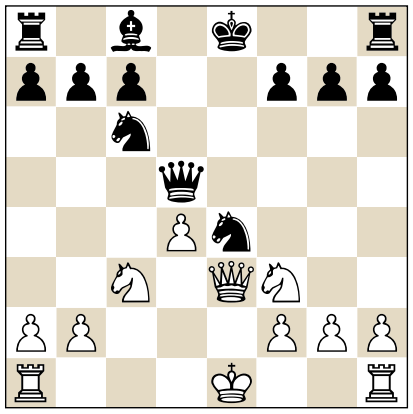
equal, but White can certainly play in the resulting isolated pawn middle game.

However, slightly unpleasant is 10...♘a5 11.♕a4+ ♘c6, when White has not been very successful in finding ways to avoid the repetition 12.♕b3 ♘a5.

Enter Ian Rogers, who introduced the pawn sacrifice 8.♕xd2 in a Zonal Tournament in 1978, deciding 30-odd years later (!) to publish his idea in *SOS-13* (New In Chess, 2011).

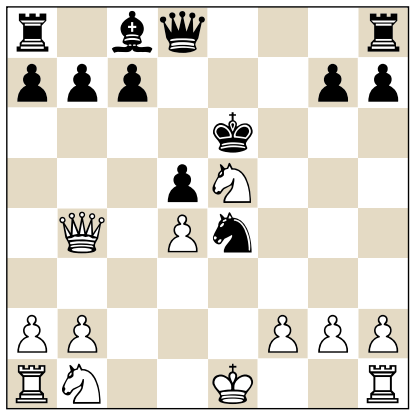


After 8...♘xe4 9.♕e3 the way to go for Black is probably 9...d5 10.♗xd5 ♕xd5 11.♘c3



with approximate equality, for 9...♕e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖e1 offers White considerable compensation after, for example, 11...♘d6 12.♕d3 ♕f6 13.♘c3 ♘xc4 14.♕xc4 ♕d8 15.d5 ♘e7 16.d6 (Rogers). This should be compared to our SOS line below. With no development and his whole queenside locked in, Black is horribly placed.

However, returning to the position after 7.♗d2, it must be said that Black can avoid Rogers's SOS idea with 7...♘xe4, which is completely satisfactory for Black after the forced 8.♗xb4 ♘xb4 9.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 10.♕b3+ d5 11.♘e5+ ♔e6! 12.♕xb4



and now the active 12...c5!? or the more solid 12...♕f8, an old suggestion of Gorelov's, which was Aronian's choice against Harikrishna in the first round of the Tata Steel 2014 Chess Tournament.

■ Finally, we can mention the Krakow Variation 7.♔f1?!, when Black is doing well after 7...d5 (7...♘xe4 8.d5 is supposed to give White a lot of compensation, but even this verdict may be in for a correction after 8...♘e7 9.♕d4 ♘f6 10.♗g5, and now 10...c5!?) 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.♘c3 ♗e6.

So from our brief theoretical overview we learn that White often plays for a space advantage with d4-d5, while Black, when confronted with White's ideal pawn centre, often has a choice between taking on e4 and counterattacking in the centre with ...d7-d5.

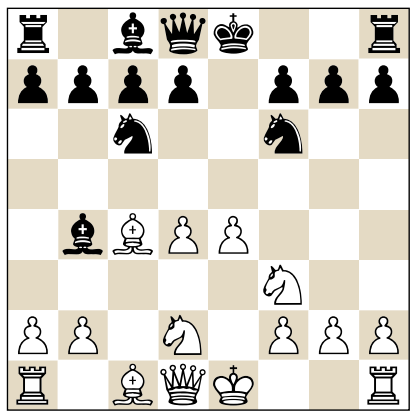
However, what should also be obvious is that White is in need of fresh ideas, as Black has several decent options after any of the moves considered.

So now, without further ado: here's Jonny Hector and the surprising

7.♘bd2!?

Black should now decide between picking up the gauntlet with 7...♘xe4 (see Hector-Koskela, Copenhagen 2012) and striking in the centre with 7...d5 (see Hector-Semcesen, Malmö 2012).

After 7...0-0, I would play 8.d5, which must be at least a slight edge for White, but in a game against J. Nilsen (Politiken Cup 2013) Hector just castled, allowing Black to transpose to a line we will investigate below (II 7...d5) with 8.0-0 d5 9.exd5 ♘xd5. However, his opponent played 9...♘e7?! 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♗a2 ♘exd5 12.♘c4 ♗b6 13.♗g5 ♗e6 14.♖e1 c6 15.♘xb6 axb6 16.♘e5 instead, and with the bishop pair and good squares for his pieces, White is slightly better, although Black is fairly solid. The game continued: 16...b5 17.♕f3 b4?! (Black loses patience when he should have stayed put with 17...♖e8). After 18.axb4 ♕b6?! 19.♗xf6! ♘xf6 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♕b3 ♖ae8 22.♕c4 White was clearly better.



Variation I – 7...♘xe4

(Hector-Koskela, Copenhagen 2012)

7...♘xe4

It makes sense to investigate this move first. If Black can just get away with grabbing the all-important e-pawn with no particular risk, then 7.♘bd2 should immediately be relegated to the dustbin.

8.d5

Bearing in mind the Møller Attack and the other examples we have seen, this advance certainly feels correct.

By comparison 8.0-0 seems a little insipid, but it may still be worth investigating for the readers.

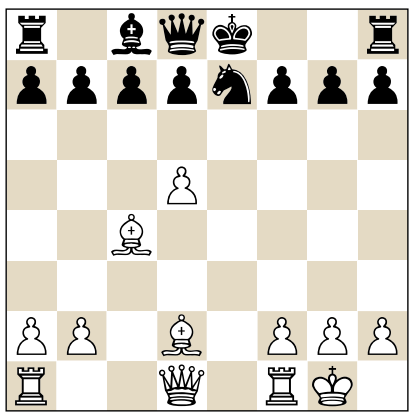
8...♘e7 9.0-0

White has his space advantage, some open files and diagonals, and a slight edge in development, but Black is solidly placed and has no weaknesses. In order not to lose more time it makes sense for Black to trade pieces on d2.

9...♘xd2

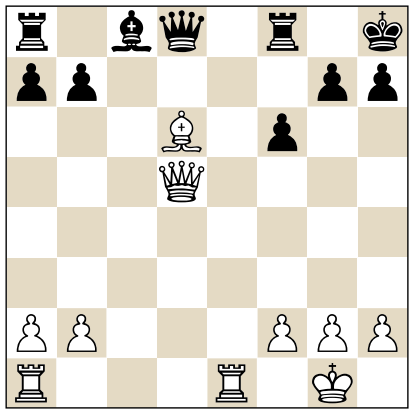
Jeroen Bosch

■ To avoid the cramping of his position (see Hector's 11.d6!) Czech grandmaster Hracek preferred to give up the bishop against Hector: 9...♗xd2 10.♘xd2 ♘xd2 11.♗xd2.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

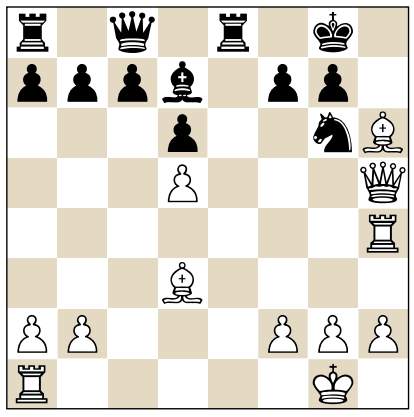
– Now, in case of 11...0-0, White can still obstruct Black's queenside development with 12.d6!. After something like 12...cxd6 13.♖e1 (13.♗c3!? d5 14.♕d4 is also strong) 13...d5 14.♗g5!? f6 15.♗xd5+ ♘xd5 16.♕xd5+ ♔h8 17.♗f4 d6! 18.♗xd6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

material is equal, but despite the presence of opposite-coloured bishops, Black has failed to equalize.

– 11...d6 was Hracek's idea, but White has more than enough for the pawn with his bishop pair and his space advantage: 12.♖e1 0-0 13.♕h5!? (a direct approach by Hector, but other moves may also be investigated) 13...♘g6 14.♗d3 ♗d7 15.♖e4 ♖e8 (15...f5) 16.♗g5 ♕c8 (16...f6 looks dangerous, but White has no more than a draw after 17.♖h4! ♘xh4 18.♕xh7+ ♔f8 19.♗xh4 ♕e7 or 19.♗h6 gxh6 20.♕xh6+ ♔g8 21.♕h7+) 17.♖h4 h6 18.♗xh6!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

18...♖e5! (the only move; 18...gxh6 19.♗xg6+–; 18...♘xh4 19.♗xg7! ♔xg7 – or 19...♘g6 20.♗xg6 fxg6 21.♕h8+ ♔f7 22.♕h7, and wins – 20.♕h7+ ♔f8 21.♕h8+ ♔e7 22.♕xh4+ ♔f8 23.♕h6+ ♔e7 24.♖e1+ ♗e6 25.dxe6 fxe6 26.♗f5+–) 19.♗g5 ♖xg5 20.♕xg5 ♘xh4 21.♕xh4 ♗f5 22.♕c4 ♗xd3 23.♕xd3 ♕d7. The game is now nearly equal, but Hector later won (with the manoeuvre ♖a1-c1-c4-h4) in Hector-Hracek, Schwetzingen 2013.

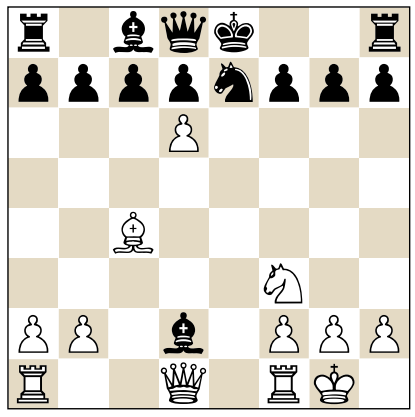
■ Withdrawing the knight seems a little slow: 9...♘f6 10.♕b3 (10.a3 ♗d6 11.b4 is a decent alternative) 10...♗d6 11.♖e1 0-0 12.♘g5 (stronger is 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4, with compensation for the pawn), and now Black played well in the only practical example with 9...♘f6: 12...b5! 13.♕xb5 c6 14.dxc6 ♖b8 15.♕a4 ♕c7, and Black had active counterplay in Cortes-Lopez, Santiago de Chile 2008.

10.♗xd2

Logically completing his development, and Hector has planned a pretty in-between move. Playing for the bishop pair is possible if, after 10.♘xd2 0-0 11.a3 ♗c5 12.♘e4 d6, White continues with 13.♘xc5 dxc5 14.♗f4, with approximately equal chances. In practice, White was successful with 13.♖e1?! ♗b6 14.a4 a5 15.♖a3 ♘g6 16.♖g3 ♗f5, but objectively Black was slightly better at this stage in Ostrovskiy-Molner, Montreal 2013.

10...♗xd2 11.d6!

Rather than taking back on d2, as 11.♕xd2 allows 11...d6, Hector sacrifices another pawn to obstruct Black's queenside development.



11...cxd6 Trying to be clever is too dangerous here:

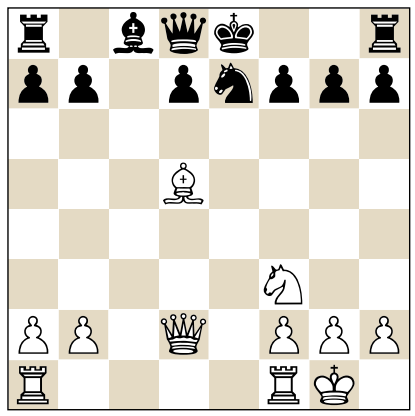
– 11...♗b4 is met by 12.♘g5! cxd6 (the only move; if 12...0-0 then 13.♕h5 h6 14.♘xf7 wins on the spot), but White still gets a huge attack after 13.♗xf7+! ♔f8 14.♗b3 ♘g6 (14...♕a5 15.♘f7 ♖g8 16.a3! and Black is in dire straits: 16...♗d2 17.♘xd6, or 16...♗c5 17.♕f3+–) 15.♕g4 ♕f6 16.♕xb4 ♕xg5 17.♖ae1, with an ongoing (winning) attack.

– 11...♘f5 is no picnic either after 12.♕xd2 ♘xd6 13.♖fe1+ ♔f8 14.♗d5, or 12.dxc7 ♕xc7 13.♕xd2 ♕xc4 (13...0-0 14.♖ac1) 14.♖fe1+ ♔f8 15.♕a5 b6 16.♕xf5 d6 17.♕g5, and White is better in both lines.

12.♕xd2 d5!

Black should return material to get his c8-bishop into play.

13.♗xd5

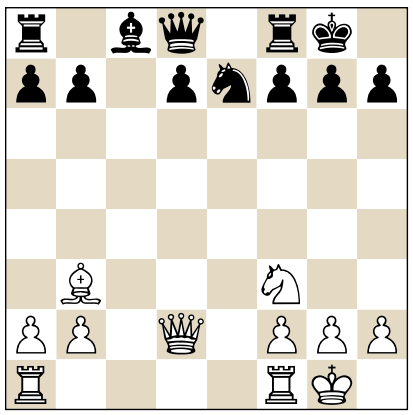


13...0-0 After 13...♘xd5 14.♕xd5 0-0 White also has enough pressure for the pawn.

Having returned one d-pawn, Black is still a pawn up. It is not too difficult to see, though, that White will retrieve that pawn as well. In the resulting symmetrical position White will take control of the open files first. How-

ever, objectively a draw is the most likely outcome.

14.♗b3!? Against Howell, Zhou Yang Fan preferred to leave the bishop on d5 with 14.♖ad1. After 14...♘xd5 15.♕xd5 d6 he tried to avoid an immediate draw with 16.b3 (!), but after 16...h6 17.♖fe1 ♖e8 18.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 Howell had more or less secured the draw anyway in Zhou Yang Fan-Howell, Leiden 2013.



14...d5!

To avoid any further unpleasantness Black returns the other d-pawn too.

15.♖fe1 This position first occurred in a game by Ponkratov. White has enough pressure for the pawn, but no advantage. Hector apparently feels that the line is sufficiently interesting for a practical game (even against weaker opposition).

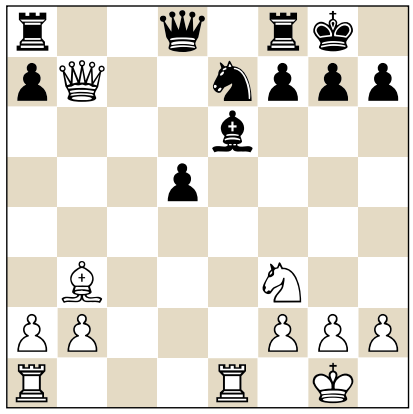
15...♗g4 15...a5 16.♖ad1?! (more interesting is 16.♖e5 ♗e6 17.♘d4 ♖a6 18.♖ae1, with considerable pressure, and chances to play for more) 16...♖a6 17.♗xd5 ♘xd5 18.♕xd5 ♕xd5 19.♖xd5, and now the game just petered out to a draw in Ponkratov-Aleksandrov, St. Petersburg 2011.

15...♗e6 is good, too, although it invites a future ♘g5 or ♘d4, while White may also double on the e-file.

16.♕b4 Alternatively, there is 16.♕g5!? ♗xf3 (16...♗e6 17.♘d4) 17.♖xe7 ♗e4 18.f3.

16...♗e6 16...♗xf3 17.♖xe7 offers White some chances to play, although 17...a5! 18.♕xb7 a4! 19.♗c2 ♖b8 should draw.

17.♕xb7 Now White has the upper hand, though; his pieces are active and his pawn structure is preferable.



17...♕d6 18.♖ac1 a5 19.♕b5?!

This is less accurate.

19...g6 19...a4! is about even after 20.♗c2 ♖fb8 21.♕d3 ♗f5. **20.♕e2 a4 21.♗c2 ♖fb8 22.♗d3 ♕f4 23.♘e5 ♖b7 24.♖c2 ♖ab8 25.♖d1 ♘f5?!**

25...d4 maintains the balance.

26.g3! ♕h6?! 26...♕g5. **27.♘c6**

Black's position is deteriorating fast.

27...♖f8 28.♗b5 ♖a8 29.a3 ♕h3?! 30.♗d3 30.♘e5!. **30...d4? 31.♖c5!**

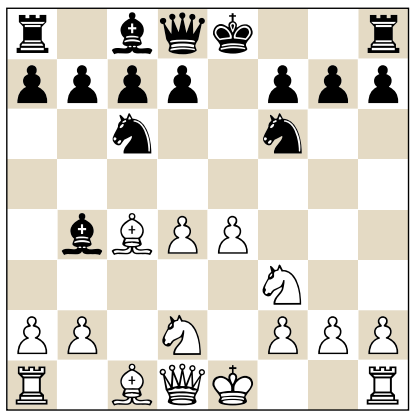
White will now win the d-pawn and keep all his positional pluses. Black put an end to his suffering with a blunder. **31...♘e3? 32.fxe3 ♗g4 33.♕f1** The move he must have overlooked. Black resigned.

In conclusion, if Black knows what he is doing, he can steer the game into a more or less equal position (although Hector still managed to outplay his opponent). White has several tricky ideas after the space grabbing 8.d5, and the reader may wish to investigate 8.0-0.

In practice Black, therefore, has often gone for the equally logical 7...d5+.

Variation II – 7... d5

(Hector-Semcesen, Malmö 2012)



7...d5

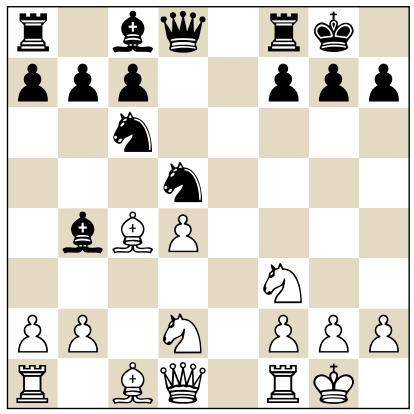
Play is less sharp and concrete after this natural move.

8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0

White castles and is happy to play a more or less standard isolated-pawn position – remember that after 7.♗d2 Black can not only avoid this by playing 7...♘xe4, but also has the unpleasant move-repetition idea of 10...♘a5.

9.♕e2+?! ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗b5 ♘db4 was already quite pleasant for Black in Ponkratov-Smirnov, Magnitogorsk 2011.

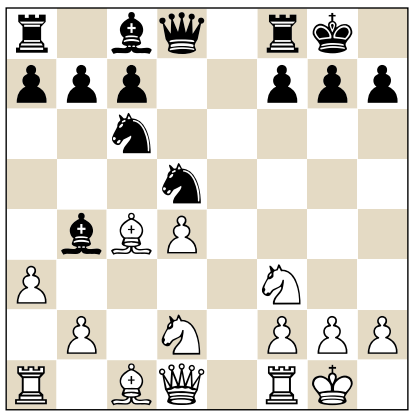
9...0-0



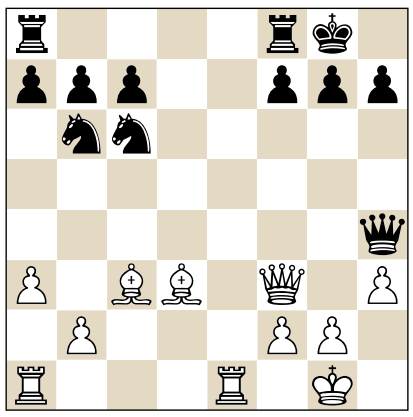
10.a3 This has been the most popular continuation by far. However, there is room for creativity here.

■ Ray Robson preferred 10.h3!? ♗f5 (10...♗e6), and only now 11.a3. After 11...♗e7 12.♖e1 ♗g6 13.♘e4 ♘f6 14.♘c3 White had a pleasant edge already, which only increased after 14...♗h5?! 15.g4, Robson-Hess, St. Louis 2012.

■ Alexandra Kosteniuk was successful with 10.♘e5!? ♘xe5 (10...♘a5 looks better, as the bishop is vulnerable to attacks from the other knight as well. However, 11.♗d3 ♘f4, and now 12.♘df3!? ♘xd3 13.♕xd3, is still of interest. White has lost his light-squared bishop but has some attacking chances, while Black's minor pieces are offside) 11.dxe5 ♘b6 12.♗b3 ♗xd2?! (12...♗e6!?) 13.♗xd2 ♗e6 14.♗c2 ♕h4 15.♕e1 ♖fd8 (15...♗c4 16.f4!) 16.b3 ♘d5 17.♗e4 c6 18.f4, with good play for White in Kosteniuk-Pogonina, Nizhny Novgorod 2013.



10...♗e7 Most players will want to keep their bishop pair. It is possible, though, to trade on d2 – in principle, when playing against an isolated pawn, any exchange of minor pieces is good. Besides, Black gains time to attack the isolated pawn here.
After 10...♗xd2 11.♗xd2 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 (12...♗h5 13.g4!? ♗g6 14.♖e1 ♘b6 15.♗a2 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♕xd4 17.♗b4 ♕xd1 18.♖axd1 ♖fe8=) 13.♕xf3 ♘b6 Black wins the d-pawn by force. On the downside, White does have a nice bishop pair: 14.♗d3 ♕xd4 (14...♘xd4 15.♕xb7 also favours White) 15.♗c3 ♕h4 16.♖fe1.



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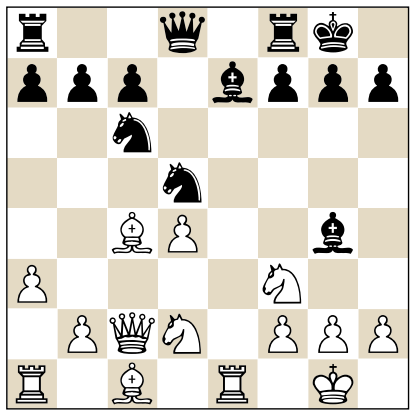
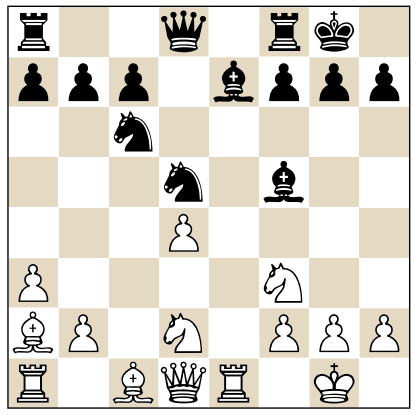
This position is difficult to play for Black. The bishops are aimed at his king and a rook lift is in the air (♖e1-e4). 16...♖ae8 17.♗e4 ♖e6 18.♗xc6 ♖xc6 19.♖e4 ♕d8 20.♗b4 ♖e8 21.♖d1 ♕c8 22.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 23.♕e4! ♖e6 24.♕xb7± c5? 25.♕c7, and White won in Smirnov-Bukavshin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.
The odd-looking 11.♕xd2 avoids trouble to the d-pawn and preserves a slight edge: 11...♘ce7 (11...♘b6 12.♗d3 ♕f6 13.♕c2 h6 14.♗e3, Pridorozhni-Kurnosov, Belgorod 2008) 12.♖e1 c6 13.♕c2 ♗f5 14.♕b3 ♕c7 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗d2 ♔h8 17.♘h4, F.Erwich-Van den Doel, Roosendaal 2012.
11.♖e1 The logical move, but it allows Black the diagonal b1-h7 for his bishop. To avoid this, White has also played 11.♕c2 ♗g4 (11...♘b6 12.♗d3 h6 13.♘b3 ♗e6 14.♗e3 ♗d5 15.♘bd2= Pomini-Dastan, Al-Ain 2013) 12.♖e1, and now practice has seen:

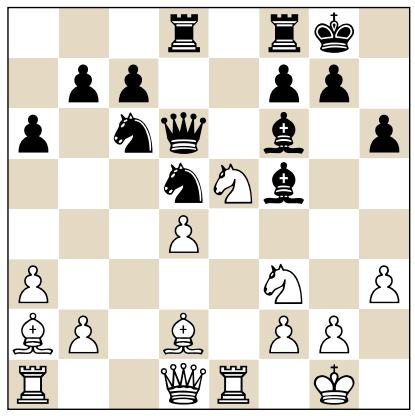


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 12...♗h5 13.b4 ♗g6 14.♕b3 ♘b6 15.♗b2 ♗f6 (15...♘xc4 16.♘xc4 ♗f6 17.d5 ♗xb2 18.♘xb2 ♘e7 19.♖ad1=) 16.♖ad1 ♘e7 17.♗f1 ♕d5 with approximately even chances in Chuprov-Genba, Pardubice 2008.
– 12...♖e8 13.♗d3 (13.b4) 13...♘f6! 14.h3 ♗h5 15.♗b5 ♕d5! and Black was OK in Chuprov-Potapov, Pardubice 2008.
11...♗f5 The most active diagonal for the bishop. 11...♗e6 12.♗a2 (12.♘e4 ♘e3! 13.♗xe3 ♗xc4 is equal; 12.♕c2 was possible though) 12...♘f4 13.♘c4 (13.♘e4!? ♗xa2 14.♖xa2 ♘d5 15.b4 and odd as it looks, White still has a little something. He intends to double on the e-file and play ♕b3 and ♘c5) 13...♘g6 14.♗e3 ♗f6 15.♕d3 ♗d5 16.♘cd2 ♗xa2 17.♖xa2 ♕d5 and if anyone, Black is slightly better. The game Hector-Sokolov, Malmö 2013, eventually ended in a draw.
12.♗a2
Clearly, this is a position in which both sides have something to boast about. White will argue that more space and the isolated pawn will give him active piece play; Black will point out that the isolated pawn is a structural weakness. White appears to be a tad better.
Instead 12.♘e4 ♖e8 13.♘g3 ♗g6 14.b4?! (14.♗a2) 14...b5! 15.♗d3 (15.♗xb5? ♘c3) 15...a5 16.bxa5 ♖xa5 17.♗d2 b4 18.♗xg6 hxg6 19.♖c1 was even in Daulyte-Zawadzka, Warsaw 2013, but 16...♘xa5 would have given Black the better position.



12...a6 12...♘b6 should be answered by 13.♘e4 (rather than 13.♘f1 ♗f6 14.d5 ½-½ Chuprov-Azarov, Voronezh 2008) 13...♕d7 14.♗f4 ♖ad8 15.♖c1, with slightly superior chances.
13.♘c4 ♗f6 14.h3 h6 15.♘ce5 As always, the isolated pawn provides White with strongholds for his knights (squares e5 and c5).
15...♕d6 16.♗d2 ♖ad8

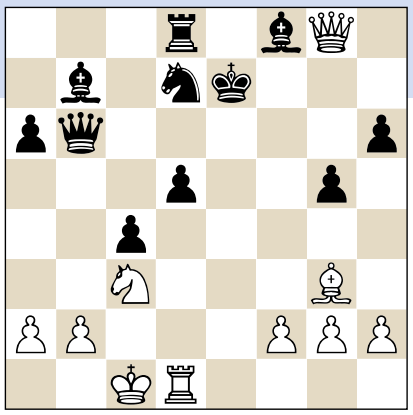


17.♖c1 Here 17.♕b3! was the way to increase the pressure. It is annoying for Black that b7 is hanging. A sample line would be 17...♗e6 18.♕xb7 ♘xd4 19.♘xd4 ♗xe5 20.♘c6!, and Black has some problems to solve.
17...♘ce7 18.♘c4 Again 18.♕b3 was good. **18...♕d7 19.♘fe5 ♕c8 20.♕f3 ♗e6**
Even here White is still slightly ahead, but the game now starts to lose its significance for us (Hector played 21.g4?! ♗g5, when the chances were equal). ■

Yochanan Afek

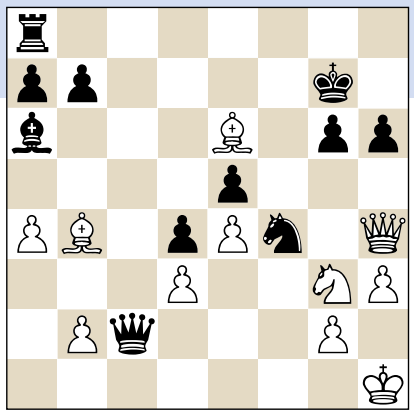
Beware: Brilliancy!

Solutions of page 53



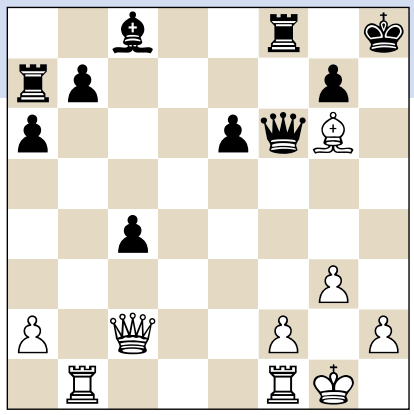
1. Bosboom-Sethuraman
Haarlem 2013

White could crown his fine play with **21.♕h7+! ♔f6 22.♖xd5!** and wins, since Black cannot defend against the double threats 23.♖f5+ and 23.♖xd7.



2. Williams-Al.l'Ami
Amsterdam 2014

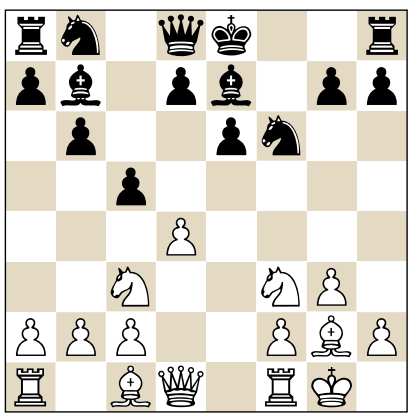
I trust most readers did not fail to spot the mate in 4: **34.♗f8+! ♔xf8** 34...♖xf8 35.♕e7+. **35.♕f6+ ♔e8 36.♕f7+ ♔d8 37.♕d7** Mate.



3. Ernst-Smerdon
Amsterdam 2014

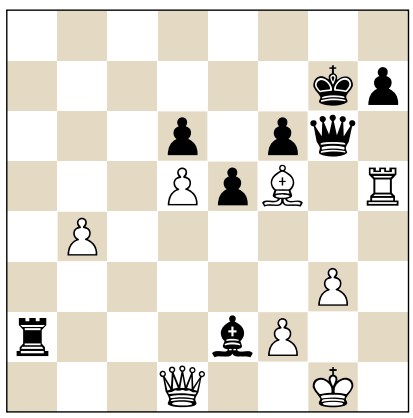
Correct was **23.♕xc4! ♕xg6** 23...♕g5 24.♕b4 ♖d8 25.♖bd1!. **24.♕c5!** winning one of the black rooks.

Readers are invited to send in brilliant missed opportunities by titled players to: afekchess@gmail.com



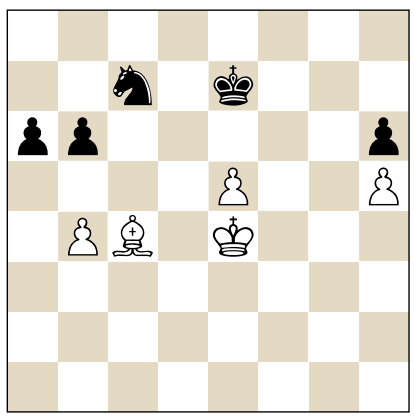
4. Van Delft-Ernst
Amsterdam 2014

White gets an overwhelming strategic advantage with **10.d5!! ♘xd5** No better is 10...exd5 11.♘g5! h6 12.♘xd5! hxg5 13.♘xf6+ gxf6 14.♗xb7 or 10...♗xd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.♘e5! ♘c6 13.♘xc6 dxc6 14.♕h5+ g6 15.♕e2. **11.♘e5! ♘xc3 12.♕h5+ g6 13.♘xg6 ♘e2+ 14.♕xe2 hxg6 15.♗xb7**



5. Erwich-Afek
Amsterdam 2013

Both players overlooked an amazing invisible resource: **42.♖xh7+!! ♕xh7 43.♕b1! ♕h5** Or 43...♕h6 44.♕xa2 ♕c1+ 45.♔h2 ♗f3 46.♕a7+, with perpetual check. **44.♕xa2 ♕xf5 45.♕xe2 ♕b1+ 46.♔g2 ♕xb4** with equality.



6. Zakhartsov-Estremera
Groningen 2013

A more active approach was called for: **51...a5! 52.bxa5 bxa5 53.♔f5 ♘a8!!** Manoeuvring the knight via the corner is rarely seen in practice. **54.♔g6 ♘b6 55.♗a2 ♘d7! 56.e6 ♘f8+ 57.♔xh6 a4 58.♔g7 ♘xe6+** with a draw.

Susan Polgar Chess Daily News

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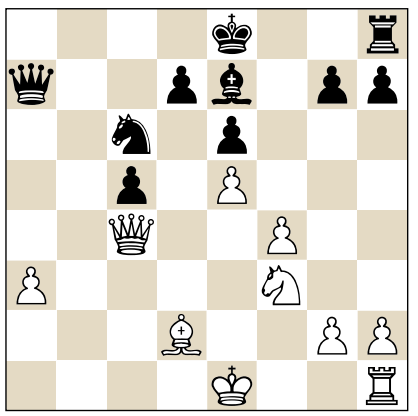
Moments with Magnus

I'm currently watching the third round of the very entertaining Candidates' tournament, while surrounded by books about Magnus Carlsen. It's a funny mix watching the potential challengers rip each other to pieces while reading about the monster they'll have to face at the end of it. These are 4 very different books: ***Fighting Chess with Magnus Carlsen*** is a standard games collection, ***Magnus Force*** is billed as an attempt to unravel Magnus' secret, while ***Carlsen's Assault on the Throne*** covers Magnus' route to the World Championship, annotating all his games from the London Candidates' and the World Championship match. Without reservation, the book I enjoyed the most was Simen Agdestein's ***How Magnus Carlsen Became the Youngest Chess Grandmaster in the World***, a description of Magnus' staggering progression from playing his first tournament at the age of 8 years and 7 months to achieving his grandmaster title at the age of 13 years and 4 months. From a rating of 904 in June 2000 to 2552 in April 2004! Simen Agdestein was Magnus' coach and a friend of the family during this incredible period and he writes with great honesty, affection and modesty about this experience. I'll use this book as the basis for most of this review because it provides so many insights into Magnus' chess personality.

The basis of Magnus' success – the initial catalyst for his chess skill – seems to have been a magnificent memory. Agdestein gives a number of examples of Magnus' ability from a young age to recall games played in openings he'd never played. In ***Fighting Chess with Magnus Carlsen*** Mikhalchishin quotes Agdestein as saying that 'he gave the young Magnus an opening book to read, and the next day, as if nothing had happened, he performed the opening to a high standard'. And there is much evidence of this exceptional ability throughout the book. For example, in the chapter covering January-June 2002 (when Magnus was 11) you see White games with 1.♘f3, 1.e4 and 1.d4 (including two different systems against the KID). With black against 1.e4, the focus seems to be on the Sicilian, but still two different systems: the Sveshnikov (a favourite of his when he was little) and the Richter-Rauzer. Quite unsettlingly, the way he plays the openings seems 'right'. You would think he'd been playing all these openings for many years!

It's maybe not totally obvious, but you can't overestimate how important it is for a young player to have good openings. Just from my own experience, I made a huge jump in strength at the age of 11 when I switched from the London System for White (1.d4 2.♘f3 3.♗f4) and the Ruy Lopez for Black, to KID Four Pawns Attacks and the Najdorf. All that dynamic potential that your pieces gain in aggressive openings is perfect for the energy and enthusiasm of a child! You suddenly notice that even strong players – in the immortal words of Corporal Jones in *Dad's Army* – 'don't like it up 'em' and play much weaker under pressure. Most importantly, the confidence you gain from starting the game well seeps into other parts of your game. You approach endings positively too and play them much better than you ought to considering how few of them you've seen!

Another notable feature of Magnus' play from the very start is his complete willingness to jettison pawns in order to speed up his initiative. Just turned 11, rated 2084, he was already using this technique to impressive effect:

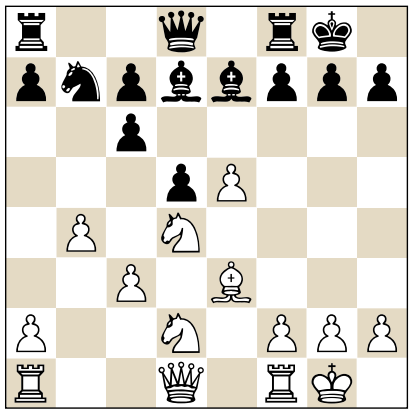


Carlsen-Thorhallsson
Bergen Nordic championship 2001

22.0-0 Leaving the pawn on a3 to be captured and intending to meet 22...♕xa3 with the aggressive 23.f5. **22...0-0 23.♗c3 g6 24.♖d1 ♖b8 25.h4 ♖b7 26.h5** Still not worrying about the a3-pawn! **26...♕xa3 27.hxg6 hxg6 28.♖xd7 ♖xd7 29.♕xe6+ ♔g7 30.♕xd7 ♕xc3 31.♕xc6** ...and the game eventually

ended in a draw (Magnus' first against a Grandmaster).

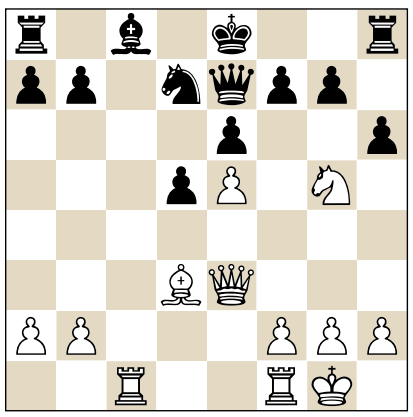
This made me think of his crazy game against Harikrishna at Wijk aan Zee in 2013. Crouch comments in ***Magnus Force*** that 'Carlsen is going for an all-out attack against the king (...) This is unusual for him, as usually he prefers a longer, slower grind', but when you have seen the game above, you rather feel that he was reverting to type!



Carlsen-Harikrishna
Wijk aan Zee 2013

13.f4 a5 14.f5
Giving up the queenside in return for some dangerous kingside play.
14...axb4 15.cxb4 ♗xb4 16.♕g4 ♗c3 17.♖ac1 ♗xd4 18.♗xd4 ♖xa2 19.e6 f6 20.♘b3 ♗e8 21.♘c5
With a wild position that Magnus won 25 moves later after many adventures.

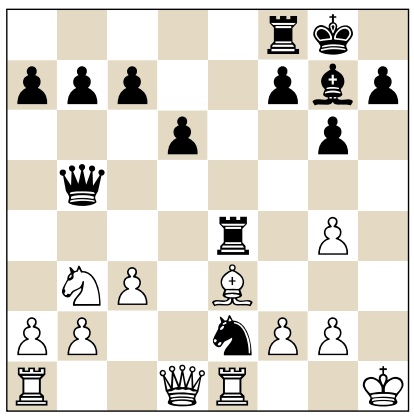
He also developed a nice line in queen sacrifices. A couple of examples:



Carlsen-Gulbrandsen
Norway 2002

20.♕xa7
Lovely!

> 'The first time I saw him live, I couldn't help thinking that he looked completely bored behind the chessboard!'



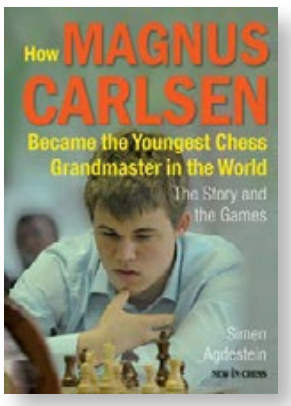
Hammer-Carlsen
Halkidiki WCh-U14 2003

17...♕h5+
Aaah!

So did everything always go right for Magnus? Well, to reach the GM title so quickly, you feel that there can't have been much time for setbacks, but they were there all the same. At junior level, he found gold elusive in the European and World Championships, and there were the occasional dips and poor tournaments. Magnus' sheer appetite for chess is so striking though. The book quotes Magnus (11 years old) during a Gausdal tournament agreeing to break off his nightly blitz activities and go to bed early... at 12.30 am! The book is full of references to Magnus pestering his family into submission to take him to a tournament when the prospect of a few weeks without chess loomed large. That surprised me because the first time I saw him live, I couldn't help thinking that he looked completely bored behind the chessboard! Mikhalchishin comments on this too: 'The first thing that strikes you (incidentally, this is also the opinion of the well-known manager Silvio Danailov) is the feigned lack of energy, both in external appearance, and in play. All the champions, apart from Karpov and Petrosian, looked very energetic, sometimes even frightening. As for Karpov, he had enormous internal energy which he was able to transfer to the chess board. The drive of Kasparov and Fischer was felt as soon as their opponent arrived at the chess board. Carlsen conducts certain parts of the game as though imperceptibly, in the style of Karpov or Adams, but in contrast to them, he not only does not avoid sharp variations, but happily goes in for them.'

The thing I found most interesting was to compare Magnus as we see him now – strong under pressure, relentless fighter and remorseless endgame technique – to the young Magnus. It's strange to learn that those three qualities weren't always the most obvious facets of his play. A friend of mine posted a game on Facebook he'd played against Magnus in Gausdal when Magnus was 11: a 12-move draw! Agdestein mentions the game he won with black against Bluvshtein to secure his first IM norm as a turning point: 'It was clear (...) that this result had changed something about Magnus. Before he had problems playing under pressure. Now this barrier had been broken.' Mikhalchishin makes a very perceptive observation on this point: 'In recent times Magnus has greatly added to his depth of understanding of chess, he has begun

How Magnus Carlsen Became the Youngest Chess Grandmaster in the World
The Story and the Games
by Simen Agdestein
New In Chess 2013
(also on iPad)



to display an ability to find minimal and latent chances in any position and he has clearly become more forceful in his play. That is, he has mastered the transition to total chess, the readiness to fight to the end. We are seeing the development of a fighter. It should be said that in their youth, neither Fischer nor Kasparov was an uncompromising fighter. They became this with the growth in the confidence and power of their play and, let's make no secret of the fact, an awareness of their mission in the chess world.'

> 'I suddenly started barking back "You don't know that!" (not good in a packed train coupe during rush hour!).'

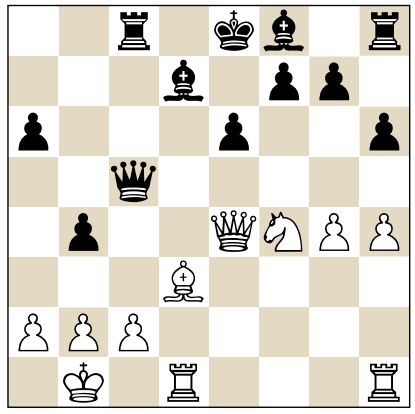
As for endgame technique, Mikhalchishin provides a series of examples between 2001 and 2006 to show that endgame technique – especially the defence of inferior endgames – was one of the weaker aspects of Magnus' play! It does make you think back a little at the rook endgame he lost against Ivanchuk in that crazy finish to the 2013 Candidates' tournament... Mikhalchishin concludes that he must have worked very hard on this aspect of the game because from 2006 onwards he starts to produce some excellent endgame victories. Yeah... he was 16 in 2006. That weakness had lasted far too long!

So far I haven't mentioned either ***Magnus Force*** or ***Carlsen's Assault on the Throne*** that much, which is maybe a little unfair. Both are very interesting but for various reasons, I found them a little hard going.

Colin Crouch must have put a huge effort into ***Magnus Force*** and there is tons of excellent analysis to enjoy. It was just the general format of the book and the tone occasionally that raised my blood pressure a little. Starting a book with 60 pages about Magnus' losses between 2010 and 2012 feels just a bit disrespectful for such a great player! The text is also heavily laden with assumptions (of the kind 'Magnus will have wanted to...') where I suddenly started barking back 'You don't know that!' (not good in a packed train coupe during rush hour!).

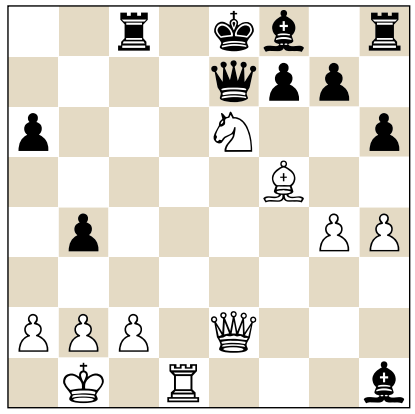
Carlsen's Assault on the Throne is a beautifully produced colour hardback book with excellent annotations by Vassilios Kotronias and plenty of background information by co-author Sotiris Logothetis. If I may criticize, I did feel that there was a bit too much about the co-author in the book's 300 pages, but I might just be a bit too focused on pure chess content!

So let's finish off with a little fragment from Magnus' game against Vladimirov played when he was still 13. This variation never appeared on the board unfortunately – Vladimirov sensed that something was brewing, though he didn't quite know what, and avoided the line! It's a great demonstration of tactical talent though. You have to be pretty special to see this at the board:



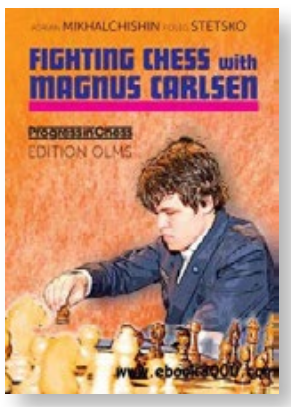
Carlsen-Vladimirov
Dubai Open 2004

In this position, Vladimirov had the tempting possibility of **21...♗c6** Magnus had prepared the quite exceptional **22.♕e2 ♗xh1 23.♘xe6 ♕e7 24.♗f5!!**

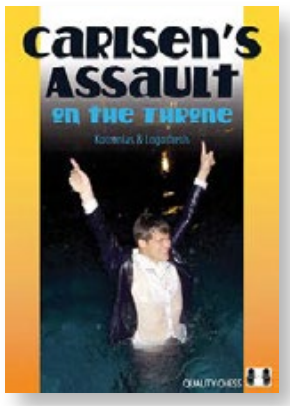


Black can't reasonably stop the threat of ♖d8+ and ♘c7 mate! Stunning! ■

Fighting Chess with Magnus Carlsen
64 of Magnus Carlsen's Best Games
by Oleg Stetsko & Adrian Mikhalchishin
Edition Olms, 2011



Carlsen's Assault on the Throne
How Carlsen became the 16th Undisputed World Champion
by Sotiris Logothetis & Vassilios Kotronias
Quality Chess, 2013



Magnus Force
How Carlsen beat Kasparov's record
by Colin Crouch
Everyman Chess, 2013

Hans Ree

Everybody's doing it

Weird openings have been always with us, but the principle of 'anything goes' may be more common now than it ever was. Hans Ree looks at some experiments inside and outside the realm of reason.

'Keine Experimente', no experiments, that was the election slogan of the German CDU (Christian Democratic Union) in 1957. Stay where you are and vote for the reliable *Bundeskanzler* Konrad Adenauer and not for the fickle social democrats, that was the message.

I was 12 at the time. My parents were lifelong social democrats, so the dull slogan of the German centre-right party was not well-received in our home. I had no idea then that in politics dullness can be an important quality.

The slogan proved to be one of the most effective in parliamentary history, tailor-made for this period of Cold War anxiety. The CDU gained an absolute majority in parliament, the greatest success ever in the history of that party.

The effective battle cry for solidness must have made a great impression on me, otherwise I wouldn't have remembered it for such a long time. During my bi-weekly blitz sessions with Katy Van der Mije-Nicolau, who died in October last year, I used the slogan now and then as a gentle reproach, referring to her narrow opening repertoire, and then she invariably answered cheerfully: 'One idea, but fixed.'

There is a website *chesspersonality.com* where you must answer 20 questions and then you are told what your chess personality is and which openings are fit for you. I answered the questions truthfully and was told that my type was 'Magician' (like the young Mikhail Tal), which was as far off the mark as could be. I consider myself a follower of Max Euwe, who always tried to play actively, but never fancifully. Tal was my hero, but his style of play during his early years was something that I wouldn't even try to emulate.

Originality for the sake of it

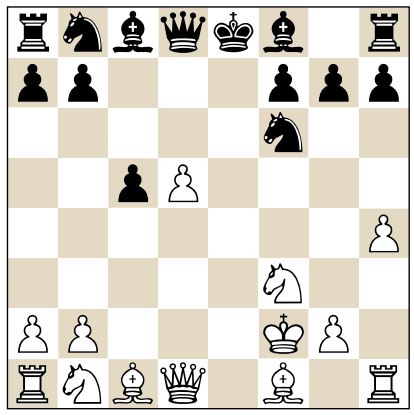
In 1991, I wrote an article for this magazine entitled 'No Joy with the Dutch'. It was based on conversations with the Dutch IM Gerard Welling, a lover of irregular openings, who had told me that Dutch chess had no great eccentrics, only pseudo-originals (like himself, he implied) who would half-heartedly try something fancy like 1.h3 and 2.g4, but after one loss would return to the trusted 1.e4.

And for the real eccentric, playing chess against the solid Dutch was no fun. Michael Basman once said that when he sacrificed a pawn, an Englishman would joyfully jump into a chaotic battle, but a Dutch opponent would just sit on his plus pawn.

In that article I showed a game by a real eccentric, the Hungarian Gabor Kadas, who specialized in the opening 1.h4. Here it is again, for a new generation of lovers of the ultra-weird.

VO 24.1 – A00
Gabor Kadas
Sergey Arkhipov
Kecskemet 1984

1.h4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♘f3 c5 4.c4 d5 5.e3 dxe3 6.cxd5 exf2+ 7.♔xf2 ♘f6 Already the decisive mistake.



8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♖e1+ ♗e7 10.d6 ♗xb5 11.♖xe7+ ♔f8 12.♘g5 ♗e8 13.♕b3 ♘g4+ 14.♔e1 c4 15.♕f3 ♘f6 16.♕xf6 gxf6 17.♘e6+ fxe6 18.♗h6+ ♔g8 19.♖g7+ ♔f8 20.♖xb7+ ♔g8 21.♖g7+ ♔f8 22.♖d7+ ♔g8 23.♖xd8 ♔f7 24.d7
And Black resigned.

Well, that was fun. But it's also a sin against chess, I think. You can't call 1.h4 an experiment, since a real experiment should have the aim of providing some insight.

Hans Ree

A mischievous joker

Here I must confess that around 1960 I lost a game against a fellow junior, Hans Luuring, who had opened with 1.h4. To punish him for his arrogance I stupidly snatched a pawn with ...♗f8-e7xh4, thereby giving the rascal everything he could want.

This Hans Luuring played a prominent role when, in 1961, a game by telegraph was played by the artist Marcel Duchamp against some youngsters in Amsterdam, among them Tim Krabbé and I. The procedure was that Luuring did a round of telephone calls with us to decide on our choice of moves. Officially there would be a vote in case of disagreement, but as only Luuring knew the preferences of the other teammates, he was able to make his own choice count at least double. We lost that game.

The Dutch IM Kick Langeweg told me about other misdeeds by the same Hans Luuring. They were connected with the 1962 Student Olympiad in Marianske Lazne in Czechoslovakia. Luuring played as a reserve for the Dutch team, and I think he was also its captain. I was not there.

After the tournament, on the homeward journey, Langeweg was a passenger in Luuring's car. They got into an argument somewhere in Germany and Langeweg was forced to leave the car, so that he had to continue his journey to the Netherlands by hitchhiking. But that was not all. Luuring wrote a report on the Student Olympiad for the magazine of the Dutch chess federation. His score had been 1½ out of 6, which was not very good, so for the magazine he changed that to 2½ out of 5. But this way, the individual scores of the Dutch players did not add up to the official total of the team, which Luuring did not dare to change, because the magazine's editor Slavekoorde was a meticulous statistician who would spot that mistake immediately.

So Luuring had to compensate for his deceit with another piece of mischief, and again the victim was Langeweg. He had scored 7 out of 12, which was changed in Luuring's report to 6 out of 13. Now the individual scores added up to the right total again.

All this is just to show that you can expect anything from a man who opens with 1.h4. On the other hand, it must be said that Hans Luuring was a jovial fellow with whom you could have fun.

A new step in chess evolution

As with people in general, I appreciate chess players and their openings to be somewhat crazy, but not too much over the top.

At the Tata Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee, there were two players, the young Hungarian Richard Rapport in the Masters and the Georgian Baadur Jobava in the Challengers, who might be called eccentric. Jobava, about whom Jan Timman wrote in the previous issue of New In Chess, remained in the realm of sanity with his choice of irregular openings, but Rapport sometimes strayed beyond it. At least that's what I think.

Consider Rapport-Dominguez, which started 1.c4 c5 2.♘c3 g6 3.g4. What is the idea of that last move? Isn't it just like waving a red flag at a bull by provocatively creating a weakness? Sanity triumphed; Dominguez won.

I talked with NIC editor René Olthof about Rapport's 3.g4, and he explained to me that it represented a new step in the evolution of chess theory.

René said: 'At first they used to play g2-g4 with a clear concept: to go at a black knight on f6 and chase it away from that good square, as in the Keres Variation of the Sicilian. But then they went a step further, playing g2-g4 against a knight that was not yet at f6, but might like to go there. That was a slightly vaguer concept, but still understandable.'

He mentioned a game Karpov-Kasparov from their second World

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Michael Basman, opening eccentric extraordinaire, playing a blitz game against GM Peter Wells in the VIP-room of the 2013 London Chess Classic. Basman has already played ...g5-g4 and his king just went to d7. Black duly won.

Championship match that started 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.g4. I thought of an early example, the 7th game of the World Championship match in 1935 between Alekhine and Euwe. After 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘e2 dxe4 5.a3 ♗e7 6.♘xe4 ♘c6 Alekhine played 7.g4, quickly got a large advantage and won. He surely was ahead of his time, and the game shows what shock value a new outrageous move can have, even when objectively it's not good.

René went on, with a chuckle: 'Aiming at a knight that wasn't yet there may have been a rather abstruse concept, but nowadays they have refined this strategy. They play g2-g4 without any concept at all'.

Rapport's provocations

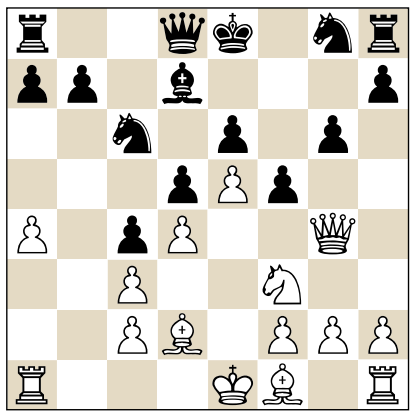
Somewhat later, at the Reykjavik Open, Kjartarsson-Rapport started with 1.♘f3 e6 2.g3 g5 3.d4 g4 4.♘e5 h5. Gaining space on the kingside, you might say if you were in a good mood. Black won that game.

I don't want to be a Savonarola of chess orthodoxy, but these g2-g4 or ...g7-g5 moves remind me of involuntary spasms like Dr. Strangelove's 'German salute' in Stanley Kubrick's famous film.

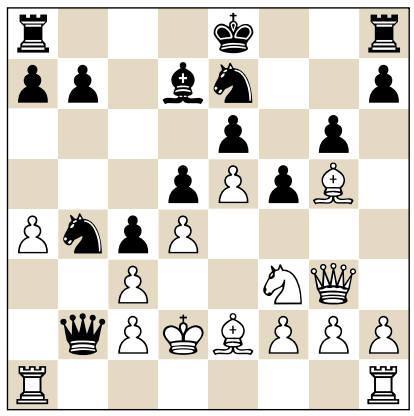
That's not to say that I won't follow Rapport's excursions off the beaten track with interest. In the April issue of the German magazine *Schach*, I saw a recent Bundesliga game. Robin van Kampen is a Dutch junior who in April entered the top 10 of the junior rating list as number six. He has an active and sober classical style, but here he is carried along into fantasyland.

FR 11.1 – C18
Robin van Kampen
Richard Rapport
Hockenheim Bundesliga 2014

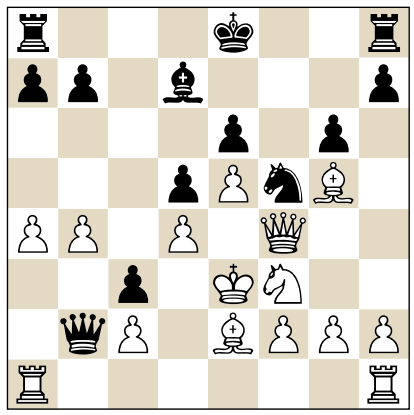
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘c6 7.♕g4 g6 8.♗d2 ♗d7 9.♘f3 c4 10.a4 f5



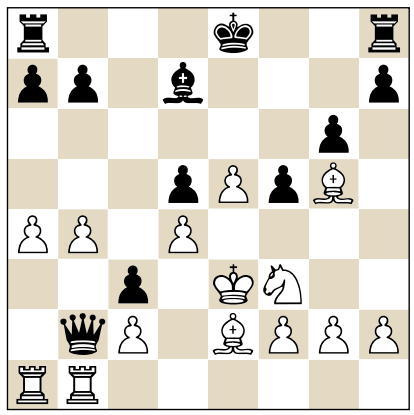
What would Wolfgang Uhlmann or Viktor Kortchnoi say about the black holes, asks *Schach*'s editor Dirk Poldauf rhetorically. **11.♕g3 ♘ge7 12.♗g5 ♕b6 13.♗e2 ♕b2 14.♔d2 ♘b4** The only way to get counterplay. Otherwise White would win with his eyes closed.



15.cxb4 According to Poldauf, White should not have taken the piece, but sacrificed an exchange with 15.♖hc1 ♘a2 16.♖xa2 ♕xa2 17.♗f6 to create a model game. I think he is right. **15...c3+ 16.♔e3 f4+ 17.♕xf4 ♘f5+** Now White has to sacrifice his queen.



18.♕xf5 exf5 19.♖hb1 And now White is winning Black's queen.

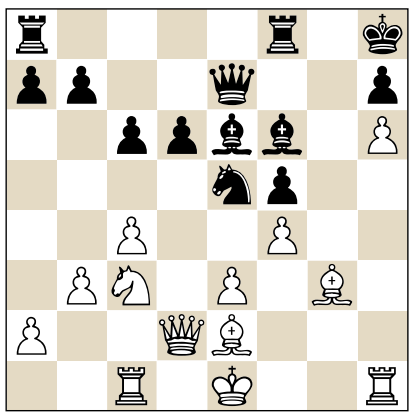


19...h6 And with this move Black wins a bishop, as after 20.♗f6 ♕xc2 21.♗d3 f4+ Black's queen would escape. Poldauf wrote: 'Friends, how on earth did you hit on such crazy things?' **20.♗f4 ♕xc2 21.♗d3**

♕xb1 22.♗xb1 g5 23.♗d3 ♖g8 24.g3 ♖c8 25.♘e1 gxf4+ 26.♔xf4 ♖g4+ 27.♔e3 Now we have a sharp endgame, which after many adventures ended in a draw.

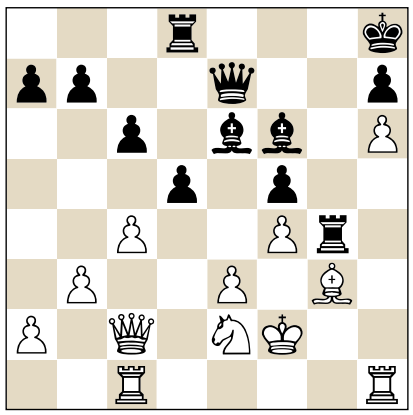
Wasting money on the Budapest

In Wijk aan Zee, both Rapport and Jobava won a fine game with the Budapest Gambit. Rapport defeated Gelfand, and Jobava beat Wojtaszek in spectacular fashion.



Wojtaszek-Jobava
Wijk aan Zee 2014
position after 19. f4

Here Jobava played **19...♖ad8** and after **20.♕c2 ♘g4 21.♗xg4 ♖g8 22.♘e2 ♖xg4 23.♔f2 d5**



he had a winning advantage.

The Budapest Gambit cannot really be called weird or eccentric, of course, but can it be good to play ...♘g8-f6-g4xe5 to regain a pawn? To me this seems a violation of the principle of economy of means. Why sacrifice it in the first place if you have to spend so much time to win it back? On the other hand, one might make a case saying that 2...e5 is the only principled attempt to prove that White's 2.c4 is a weakening move.

Every year on New Year's Eve, one of my resolutions is not to buy opening books. I do not really study them anymore, I skim through them, put them on a shelf and live with the false confidence that true knowledge is within reach. Long ago, I played with the thought of putting the work *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time) by the German philosopher Heidegger under my pillow so that understanding might seep into my brain at night, as I actually found it impossible to read. My relationship to opening books is pretty similar these days. I fancy that knowledge will come from looking at the spines of the books on my shelf.

> 'But even worse, what if one of Short's group noticed? They might think that I had spied on them in our hotel.'

I see now that I own three specialized books on the Budapest Gambit. What a waste of money for an opening that I have played only once in my life, against Genna Sosonko in 1982, and only because being Black against Genna you would have a hard time with any opening. Still, these three books might suggest that I must have some perverse relation with that opening.

In 1992, when I went to Linares as a journalist to watch the two semi-final Candidates' matches Timman-Yusupov and Karpov-Short, I took the book *The Budapest for the Tournament Player* by Mikhail Tseitlin and Igor Glazkov with me. The matches were played at the Anibal hotel, owned by chess patron Luis Rentero who, through the years, had ruled his Linares super-tournaments, the Wimbledon of chess as Kasparov called it, with an iron hand and a big heart. Everyone who was involved with the Candidates' matches stayed at the Anibal hotel.

For the first game of the matches I went to the playing hall with the Budapest Gambit book in hand – for no special reason, just to have a book with me. And then Short played the Budapest. What a coincidence. And what a potential embarrassment.

What if people from Karpov's group noticed that I had a book on the Budapest with me? Prior knowledge, obviously. They might think that I was involved with Short instead of being a neutral reporter. But even worse, what if one of Short's group noticed? They might think that I had spied on them in our hotel. I quickly ran back to my hotel room and hid the incriminating evidence.

Short lost that game, although he got a decent position from the opening. When I looked at that game in my database recently, I saw a comment – probably by Murray Chandler – after 2...e5 that said: 'A few years ago this swashbuckling gambit might have been a good surprise weapon.' Not in the modern era of 1992, he implied.

The Budapest in full glory

Nowadays the Budapest Gambit would not be called swashbuckling. Just slightly unusual. Black will usually regain his sacrificed pawn, and if White decides to sit on it, Black will get decent compensation. It seems we have become more tolerant and understanding when it comes to the slightly offbeat.

NIC's Café, in our previous issue, featured the blitz game Carlsen-

Anand from Zurich, which started with 1.♘f3 d5 2.b3 c5 3.e4 dxe4 4.♘g5. The Budapest Gambit with reversed colours and with the extra move 2.b3. When I first saw that game, I thought 'Everybody's doing it', which is the title of a thesis that the Australian grandmaster David Smerdon recently wrote for the University of Amsterdam. Its subtitle is 'On the Emergence and Persistence of Bad Social Norms'.

I wondered if Carlsen had done any opening preparation. After 4...♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6, NIC wrote: 'On 5...♗f5 White can try 6.f3.' Yes he can, but whether he can get enough compensation for the pawn this way is another matter. And what if White meets 5...♗f5 with 6.♗b5+ ♘c6 7.♕e2 ♕d4 8.f3 ? This, with colours reversed, is one of the main lines of the Budapest. But then White's extra move 2.b3 would turn out to be a disadvantage, because Black would answer 8...e3. But enough said about the underlying theory of a blitz game. Carlsen won in 21 moves, which surely makes a point for the reversed Budapest.

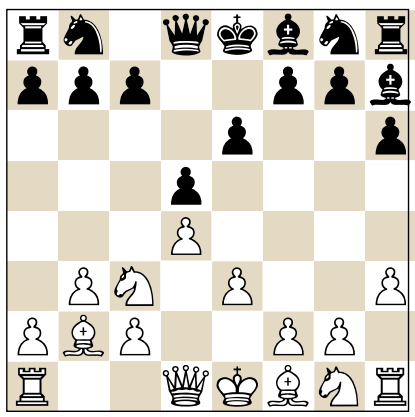
This was the Budapest Gambit with an extra move, but there is also the Budapest with an extra pawn. In the 1970s, the following variation of the Sicilian enjoyed some popularity: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 dxe5 5.♘xe5. Paul Keres and Bent Larsen played it a few times. As Larsen explained, this is the reversed Fajarowicz Variation of the Budapest without the minus pawn, since Black doesn't have a pawn on e4. So it seems the Budapest Gambit can take on many forms.

At the end of March, Vassily Ivanchuk won the Latvian Railway Open rapid tournament with the almost superhuman score of 13 out of 14. He should have lost one game, against the Latvian grandmaster Normunds Miezis, who played the Budapest Gambit with the well-known rook lift ...♖a8-a6-h6. At some point, the evaluation of my engine fell to –9 in favour of Miezis, but Ivanchuk won. Still, it was quite an advertisement for the Budapest Gambit.

They do it with mirrors

To come back to the two iconoclasts Jobava and Rapport, they have at least three regular opening choices in common. The Budapest, the Nimzowitsch-Larsen-Van Geet opening 1.b3 (or sometimes 1.♘f3 and 2.b3) and what is sometimes called the Neo-Veresov, 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♗f4. This you might call a mirrored Italian Game. The real Italian looks more forceful, but Jobava has done wonders with the seemingly humdrum Neo-Veresov.

Of these three I am most interested in the 1.b3 system. I have played many blitz and rapid games and some classical games with 1.b3, and I was surprised to see Jobava playing this system in a way I had never thought of.



Jobava-Yu Yangyi
Wijk aan Zee 2014
position after 6.d4

Not only I, but also Jan Timman, who wrote about this game in our previous issue, was a bit surprised about White closing the diagonal a1-h8. In all my games I tried to open this diagonal, even with extreme measures like f2-f4 and g2-g4-g5. But of course there was a point to Jobava's play. Black will be unable to develop meaningful activity without playing c7-c5 at some point, so he is bound to open that vital diagonal himself.

When you look at the diagram, you will see that White is playing a reversed mirrored King's Indian. No King's Indian player worth his salt is ever worried when his bishop on g7 is buried behind a pawn chain. He knows that his cherished bishop will come alive eventually.

A reversed Budapest, a mirrored Italian and a reversed mirrored King's Indian... we are in a hall of mirrors. I wonder if insights about opening theory can be gained this way, by looking through a mirror. I have tried sometimes, for instance by playing like Tigran Petrosian (I mean the World Champion, not his namesake) sometimes did as Black in the French: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 b6 5.a3 ♗f8, followed by ...♗b7 and ...♘c6. As an ultra-slow and rather passive variation of the French this does not appeal to me. But when I look at it as a mirrored King's Indian, it seems much more acceptable.

> 'I wonder if insights about opening theory can be gained this way, by looking through a mirror.'

I look forward to following Rapport and Jobava to see what they'll come up with next. Jobava seems to me to be the more gifted player. Sometimes he is a real magician, but as he has readily acknowledged himself several times, he has a tendency to drink too much, whereas Rapport is still young and fresh. Anyway, both of them have shown, and will surely show in the future, that there is more between a1 and h8 than I might have thought of. ■

Walter Browne

CURRENT ELO: 2453
DATE OF BIRTH: January 10,1949
PLACE OF BIRTH: Sydney, Australia
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Berkeley, California, USA

What is your favourite colour?
Green because it is serene, plus we all need to 'think green' environmentally and I'm 90% Irish!

What kind of food makes you happy?
My wife Raquel makes about the best rack of lamb on the planet, a dish to die for.

And what drink?
Good red wine and Grand Marnier.

Who is your favourite author?
David Chandler (*Campaigns of Napoleon*).

What was the best book you ever read?
David Howarth's *The Voyage of the Armada*.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Chicago, choreographed at the highest level, a joy from start to finish. *Lincoln*, superbly acted, a real work of art.

What is your favourite TV series?
Twilight Zone from the late 1950s.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Humphrey Bogart. 'Always kept the viewer engaged, never boring.'

And a favourite actress?
Meryl Streep, so flexible, almost timeless.

What music do you like to listen to?
Classical or Jazz.

Do you have a favourite painter?
Rembrandt for the obsessive high quality, Picasso for his unique intriguing style.

What was your best result ever?
Venice 1971, 1st (8½-2½), Wijk aan Zee 1980, =1st (10-3).

What was your best game ever?
Browne-Bisguier, U.S. championship 1974, 16.♗h6!!.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Fischer and Tal for their incredible fighting spirit, which was totally inspiring.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
Botvinnik's *100 Selected Games*, which I reread three times!

What is the best chess country in the world?
Certainly one of the northern European countries that are very supportive of the Royal Game.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Problem solving, and I know because I've plenty! Picking good stocks! Poker!!

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
Working hard early in their careers, but after achieving a level of success becoming lazy and losing the work ethic which is necessary for more.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
The further North I go the better I play and that's a hard cold fact! You might think it superstitious, but my results over the decades confirm it.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
An inventor who 'lives' to invent in the spirit of Thomas Edison or Leonardo da Vinci.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Plato, Leonardo da Vinci, Julius Caesar and a translator!

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?
In my early chess days in NYC: 'Choose your opponents wisely!' In Poker: 'Manage your bankroll well or end up a railbird!'

Is there something you'd love to learn?
To be an artist, maybe abstracts!?

Where is your favourite place in the world?
Where I live has great weather, scenic and healthy. Las Vegas and NYC for the energy!

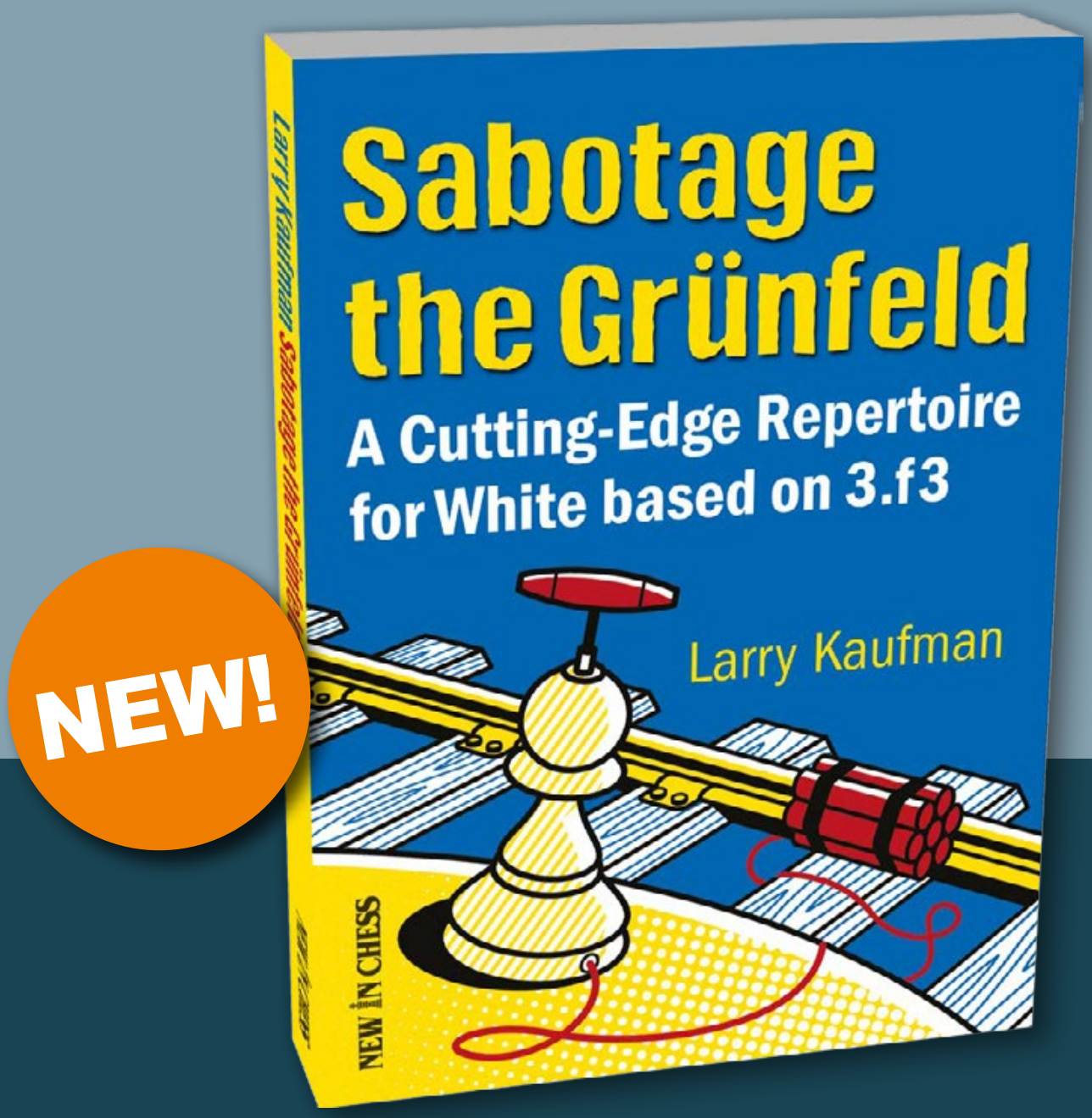
What is your greatest fear?
Not finishing my 3rd book or being unable to fully promote Finesse, a new game I invented which is 50% more dynamic than Chess.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
IPhone, laptop, passport.

What is the stupidest rule in chess?
OK, *en passant* seems like a rule a king might've made up on a whim. It doesn't seem fair that a lone two knights can't mate a lone king.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess world champion?
Chinese. As Jim Morrison of The Doors said: 'We got the numbers'. Besides they have great patience and are excellent with computers.

Taking Grünfeld players out of their comfort zone



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